THE SECOND GREAT WAR



Photo, Karsh, Ottawa

THE RIGHT HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL, P.C., C.H., M.P.

THE SECOND GREAT WAR

A Standard History

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HANDSHAKE OF KINGLY CONFIDENCE

When the King visited his troops in France in December, 1939, he met the leading generals of the French and British armies, to one of whom he is being introduced by Lt.-Gen. Sir Alan Brooke, commander of the British 2nd Corps. The little dog in the foreground took a liking to His Majesty and followed him devotedly on his tour of inspection.

British Official Photograph : Crown Copyright



LONE VIGIL IN THE BITTER COLD

At an advanced post beyond the Maginot Line the French sentry (left) keeps a watchful eye upon No-man's-land, ready to shoot at the slightest sign of enemy activity. The bitter cold makes him thankful for the long cloak in which he is enveloped.

Photo, Courtesy of French Embassy



GERMAN SENTRY SURVEYS THE WINTRY SCENE

On the other side of the line German sentries keep similar watch, and on the right, in a Christmas-card setting, a German soldier, silhouetted against the bleak sky, surveys the countryside from the top of a fortification.

Photo, Associated Press

THE FIRST TEN WEEKS OF WAR

On November 12, 1939, exactly ten weeks after the Allies declared war on Germany, Mr. Winston Churchill broadcast his impressions of that period in a review as forcible, sagacious and enheartening as any of the statements with which the First Lord was wont to instruct and encourage the British people. The greater part of this tonic speech is reproduced below.

I THOUGHT it would be a good thing for me to tell you tonight how well the war has turned for the Allies during the first ten weeks. It is quite plain that the power of the British Empire and the French Republic to restore and revive the life of the Polish and Czechoslovak peoples, as well as to do a few other things which I will mention later, has been growing every day. Peaceful parliamentary countries, which aim at freedom for the individual and abundance for the mass, start with a heavy handicap against a dictatorship whose sole theme has been war, the preparation for war, and the grinding up of everything and everybody into their military machine. In our island particularly we are very easy-going in time of peace. We should like to share the blessings of peace with every nation; and to go on enjoying them ourselves. It is only after many vain attempts to remain at peace that we have been at last forced to go to war. We tried again and again to prevent this war, and for the sake of peace we put up with a lot of things happening which ought not to have happened. But now we are at war, and we are going to make war, and persevere in making war, until the other side have had enough of it. We are going to persevere as far as we can to the best of our ability, which is not small and is always growing. . . .

We are in a very different position from what we were ten weeks ago. We are far stronger than we were ten weeks ago; we are far better prepared to endure the worst malice of Hitler and his Huns than we were at the beginning of September. Our Navy is stronger. Our anti-U-boat forces are three times as numerous. Our Air Force is much stronger. Our Army is growing in numbers and improving in training every day. Our air-raid precautions are very different from what they were at the outbreak of war. The attack of the U-boats has been controlled, and they have paid a heavy toll. Nearly all the German ocean-going ships are hiding and rusting in neutral harbours, while our world-wide trade steadily proceeds in 4,000 vessels, of which 2,500 are constantly at sea, guarded by the Royal Navy. The superior quality of our Air Force has been proved in both pilots and machines over the enemy. Our aircraft have shot down fifteen German oversea raiders without losing one machine in the combats. . . .

Time is on the Allies' Side

I DO not doubt myself that time is on our side. I go so far as to say that if we come through the winter without any large or important event occurring we shall in fact have gained the first campaign of the war: and we shall be able to set about our task in the spring far stronger—better organized, and better armed than ever before. Let us therefore bear discomfort and many minor—and even perhaps needless—vexations; let us bear them with patience, with understanding patience, because we are all the time moving forward towards greater war strength, and because Nazi Germany is all the time, under the grip of our economic warfare, falling back in oil and other essential war supplies. . . .

A long succession of important events has moved in our favour since the beginning of the war. Italy, which we had feared would be drawn from her historic partnership with Britain and France in the Mediterranean—a partnership which will become increasingly fruitful—has adopted a wide policy of peace. No quarrel has developed between us and Japan. These two great Powers, which had joined Nazi Germany in the Anti-Comintern Pact, find it difficult to accommodate themselves to the change of front towards Bolshevism which Herr Hitler and his bad adviser, Herr von Ribbentrop, those marvellous twin contortionists, have perpetrated. No one can underrate the importance of the Treaty of Alliance between Britain and France with Turkey. The Russian Soviet Government, embodied in the formidable figure of Stalin, has barred off, once and for ever, all Nazi dreams of an advance in the east. The left paw of the Bear bars Germany from the Black Sea; the right paw disputes with her the control of the Baltic. Whatever history may record about these events the fact with which we have to reckon is perfectly plain. Nazi Germany is barred off from the east and has to conquer the British Empire and the French Republic or perish in the attempt.

So now these boastful and bullying Nazi personages are looking with hungry eyes for some small countries in the west which they can trample down and loot, as they have trampled down and looted Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Now they turn their fierce, but also rather, as it seems, hesitating, glare upon the ancient, civilized, and unoffending Dutch and Belgian nations.

Holland and Belgium Apprehensive

THEY have not chosen to molest the British Fleet, which has awaited their attack in the Firth of Forth during the last week; they recoil from the steel front of the French Army along the Maginot Line; but their docile conscripts are being crowded in vast numbers upon the frontiers of Holland and Belgium. To both these States the Nazis have given the most recent and solemn guarantees; that explains why the anxiety of these countries is so great. No one believes one word Herr Hitler and the Nazi Party say, and therefore we must regard that situation as grave.

I shall not attempt to prophesy—that is always dangerous—whether the frenzy of a cornered maniac will drive Herr Hitler into the worst of all his crimes; but this I will say without a doubt, that the fate of Holland and Belgium, like that of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Austria, will be decided by the victory of the British Empire and the French Republic. . . .

I am sure we have very rough weather ahead; but I have this feeling that the Germany which assaults us all today is a far less strongly built and solidly founded organism than that which the Allies and the United States forced to beg for armistice twenty-one years ago. I have the sensation and also the conviction that that evil man over there and his cluster of confederates are not sure of themselves, as we are sure of ourselves; that they are harassed in their guilty souls by the thought and by the fear of an ever-approaching retribution for their crimes, and for the orgy of destruction in which they have plunged us all.

As they look out tonight from their blatant, clattering, panoplied, Nazi Germany, they cannot find one single friendly eye in the whole circumference of the globe. Not one! Russia returns them a flinty glare; Italy averts her gaze; Japan is puzzled and thinks herself betrayed. Turkey and the whole of Islam have ranged themselves instinctively but decisively on the side of progress. The hundreds of millions of people in India and in China, whatever their other feelings, would regard with undisguised dread a Nazi triumph, well knowing what their fate would soon be. The great English-speaking Republic across the Atlantic Ocean makes no secret of its sympathies or of its self-questionings and translates these sentiments into action of a character which anyone may judge for himself.

The 'Monstrous Apparition' of Hitlerism

THE whole world is against Hitler and Hitlerism. Men of every race and clime feel that this monstrous apparition stands between them and the forward move which is their due, and for which the age and times are ripe. Even in Germany itself there are millions who stand aloof from the seething mass of criminality and corruption constituted by the Nazi party machine. Let them then take courage amid perplexities and perils, for it may well be that the final extinction of a baleful domination will pave the way to a broader solidarity of all the men in all the lands than we ever could have planned if we had not marched together through the fire.

Historic Documents. LXXII

'EVERY DAY FINDS US STRONGER'

Soon after his return from a visit to our Armies in France, Mr. Hore-Belisha, Secretary of State for War, made on November 22, 1939, the following statement in the House of Commons on the life, work and spirit of the British Expeditionary Force His first review, on October 11, is reproduced in page 131.

By interposing a delay of several weeks the Polish Army facilitated the concentration of the French Army, and during this time, as the House is well aware, the British Army was also assembling in its positions.

When I last spoke to the House we had 158,000 men in France. Since then some thousands each week have followed them. By the spring of next year they will have been reinforced again by no inconsiderable armament. So will it continue till the cause is won.

Although there is no distinction remaining, it must be said that we could not have completed our formations in France without the assistance of the Territorial Army, whose peacetime training has adequately justified the generous sacrifice of leisure which it entailed. Territorial units reached France at a very much earlier stage and in greater numbers than in 1914. Do not, however, let this country pretend that within a proximate time Britain can furnish an Army of Continental dimensions.

The first men to be called up under obligatory service were summoned to the colours on July 15 this year. It was a timely innovation in our military practice, and we shall owe to it the smooth and steady expansion of our effort. Nearly a million men are under intensive training in Great Britain.

Our own defences by sea, land and air, and the barriers against aggression long since established by the prevision and provision of the French Republic, give safe cover to our preparations.

The Maginot Line is some measure of the debt which free nations owe to the vindicated caution of a country which, even when beset with financial troubles, did not hesitate to divert to its construction an unstinted proportion of its financial resources.

France's 800-Mile Line of Defence

The major system of the Maginot Line—with its subterranean railways, its underground accommodation, and its ingeniously emplaced batteries of guns—extends along the frontier which divides France from our enemy. That frontier is 200 miles in extent.

But the low esteem in which the given word of Germany is held, illustrated, as it has repeatedly been, by the world-wide credence that so spontaneously attaches to the slightest rumour of designs upon a neutral country, has necessitated that the defences of France should extend far beyond these limits. Indeed, whereas Germany has to defend 200 miles of frontier against the possibility of attack by the Allies, France has had to envisage the possibility of aggression by Germany along 800 miles, from the North Sea to the Alps.

We now share the task with them. There are French troops in the British part of the line, and British troops in the French part of the line. Understanding and good relations are complete.

The sector at present allotted to the British Army, while not comparable with the major system of the Maginot Line, was thus fortunately provided in advance with field works. The task which fell to our soldiers on arrival was to add to and improve upon these, and this task they are undertaking with a will.

This is a fortress war. The House can see, in its mind's eye, the busy work of our soldiers, digging and building. Under their hands blockhouses and pill boxes take shape, and with digging machines and with squelching spades they throw up breastworks or carve out entrenchments. They are making battery positions, skilfully concealed, and obstacles to tank attack. Everywhere there is activity, and everywhere there is mud. Over hundreds of square miles of this bleak scene British troops pursue their avocations. An organization of almost inconceivably great dimensions has been established —a world within a world. The food, the clothing, the equipment, the correspondence, the amusements of a whole community are brought and are distributed over a distance of hundreds of miles.

Some idea of the ground to be covered can be vividly represented by a single figure. In the initial stages the B.E.F. consumed 500 tons of petrol a day. Now, alternative bases have been established, additional locomotives will be imported and permanent-way laid down. But still it is a question of vehicles, vehicles, and more vehicles. We have already sent to France over 1,000 tons of spare parts and accessories.

If a letter is sometimes delayed in course of post, it will be recollected that in Britain communications pass through long-established channels with post-offices, machinery for sorting and static staffs. The B.E.F. has an improvised organization and is dealing with 270,000 letters and 17,000 parcels a day—in proportion double the quantity handled in 1918. . . .

Inevitable Discomforts of Active Service

A soldier's life, while he is campaigning, is never an easy one, and while everything practicable is being done to alleviate his lot, nothing can avoid the discomforts which are the inevitable accompaniment of active service conditions. No man from personal experience understands better than the present Commander-in-Chief the circumstances of warfare and the requirements of his troops. His presence, inspiring confidence, is familiar in every part of the line.

The ground which our Army occupies is also well known to him, and it is inspiring, as one stands upon some famous bridge or some hill once designated by a number, to hear his vivid description of a well-remembered exploit or encounter. On the visit from which I have just returned, I traversed with him almost the whole of the front, and came into the closest possible contact with officers and men of many different units. I can render at first hand an encouraging account of the fortitude and good temper of the troops.

Their health is exceptionally good, the sickness rate being actually lower than the peacetime rate at home. The billets are mainly in farmhouses and village buildings, but we have sent to France enough huts to house 36,000 men. We are building great hangars and depots for the accommodation of stores, and I hope that the House will realize that the organizing ability of the Army in tasks having no parallel by their magnitude and variety in civil life is illustrated by those exceptional defects which prove the rule.

Meanwhile, our Army grows. We dispatch arms and equipment to other parts of the world. We are preparing for all eventualities. At home our anti-aircraft and coast defences remain continuously manned by personnel whose conditions of service in many cases are as hard as, and more lonely than, those in France, and whose duty is as important.

We have taken, besides the Militia classes which have been called up, over 85,000 voluntary recruits since the war began. Every week we have absorbed over 300 officers from the Emergency Reserve. Over 7,000 men from the ranks have been recommended for commissions, of whom 2,500 have already been posted to officer cadet training units.

Those fit for active service in the divisions at home will be progressively relieved from duty at vulnerable points as the county home defence battalions are formed. There is room in these battalions, as in the pioneer battalions, for men past middle-age.

Thus the Army offers occupation in patriotic national service to old and young. The raising to 40,000 of the numbers of the A.T.S.—that admirable regiment of women—is another means of releasing active men for active service. Those in munition factories are doing equally valuable work, for on them depends the speed with which additional contingents can participate in the war theatre.

Thus the war proceeds. It is a war of endurance, a quality for which the British people is renowned. Every day that passes finds us stronger. On the economy of the enemy the passage of time has not the same effect. To win he would have to break through the Allied defences. An assault upon these is awaited with confidence by the French Supreme Commander. On our side we can afford to choose our opportunity. There is no dissension in our ranks; there are no conflicting counsels. Our strategy is predetermined, and so is the issue of this struggle.

Chapter 37

BRITAIN'S ARMY GOES INTO LINE ON THE ALLIED FRONT IN THE WEST

The B.E.F. Exchanges Shots with the Enemy—The King's Visit to his Troops : His Message of Confidence—Gort's Order of the Day : 'We will Stop Them, and We will Win'—First British Soldiers to be Killed in Action—Why the Allies did not Take the Initiative—Christmas Messages of the Commander—End of the Year : Four Months of Vigilance

TWENTY-ONE years after the "Cease Fire" just outside Mons on that day of Armistice in 1918, British troops were once again in action on the Western Front—in action against the same enemy but under very different circumstances. Then they were pursuing a beaten and rapidly disintegrating foe ; in 1939 they were occupying positions in a war of siege, in a line or rather zone of defensive fortifications vastly greater and stronger than ever before.

Early in December it was revealed that a large force of the British Army was holding a portion of the Allied front ; indeed, not only were men of the B.E.F. in the front line, but they had exchanged shots with the enemy. The fact came out in the course of a report of the visit to France of the King, when, following his return to London, it was announced that amongst the troops whom he had inspected in the course of his tour were men who, only the night before, had returned to their rest billets after a turn of duty in the forward zone in which they had been engaged in one of those nocturnal tussles which feature so frequently in the laconic communiqués given out by the Allied High Commands.

His Majesty had crossed to France in a British destroyer on the afternoon of December 4, and spent five days as the guest of General Lord Gort at British G.H.Q. In bitterly cold weather and often through pouring rain the procession of cars speeded through the sector allotted to the British Army ; everywhere the King was greeted with the same vociferous enthusiasm, and everywhere he found the same high note of efficiency, the same eager zeal and resolute purpose. Whether he watched them from his car as he passed them singing the songs that cheered their fathers' marching feet, or whether he walked slowly down the long lines of smartly groomed men on parade, or caught them in the domesticity of billets—always he found the same splendid qualities of the British fighting man.

The King's Visit

Immediately on his return he sent a message to Lord Gort, published by him as an Order of the Day, in which, after expressing his pleasure in visiting the troops in France and in having had the opportunity of seeing for himself something of the conditions in which they were living, and of the work on which they were engaged, he declared : "I am satisfied from all you have shown me that the British soldier of today is at least the equal of his predecessor both in efficiency and spirit," and concluded by sending an assurance of the complete and unfailing confidence placed in them by their fellow countrymen.

Even those who only a few hours before had come in from forward posts, who had taken part in a swift exchange of bullet and bomb, gave no signs of the arduous and dangerous undertaking in which they had been so recently engaged. After he had inspected the guard of honour mounted by these men of the B.E.F. who were the first to go into action in the present war, His Majesty was shown the Order of the Day issued by their G.O.C. "I wish every soldier in this force to realize," it read, "that this moment is an historical occasion. You have been chosen to go into action as the vanguard of the British Army. We shall be in the closest touch with our Allies, who have extended to us the warmest of welcomes. Unless every one of you had done his duty since arrival in France this unique honour would not have been conferred on you. The enemy awaits our arrival with expectancy. The opportunity is yours to maintain and enhance the glorious traditions inscribed on your Colours. Be vigilant, keep cool and fire low—to the last round and the last man, and a bit more. The eyes of your country as well as those of your allies and the whole Empire are on you. With justice on our side, your proud watchwords will be, 'On ne passe pas, On les aura'—'We will stop them, and we will win.'"

'On ne passe pas!'



GOING THE ROUNDS

A British officer wearing his gas-mask is here seen making a tour of inspection of an underground sector in the British zone of the Western Front.

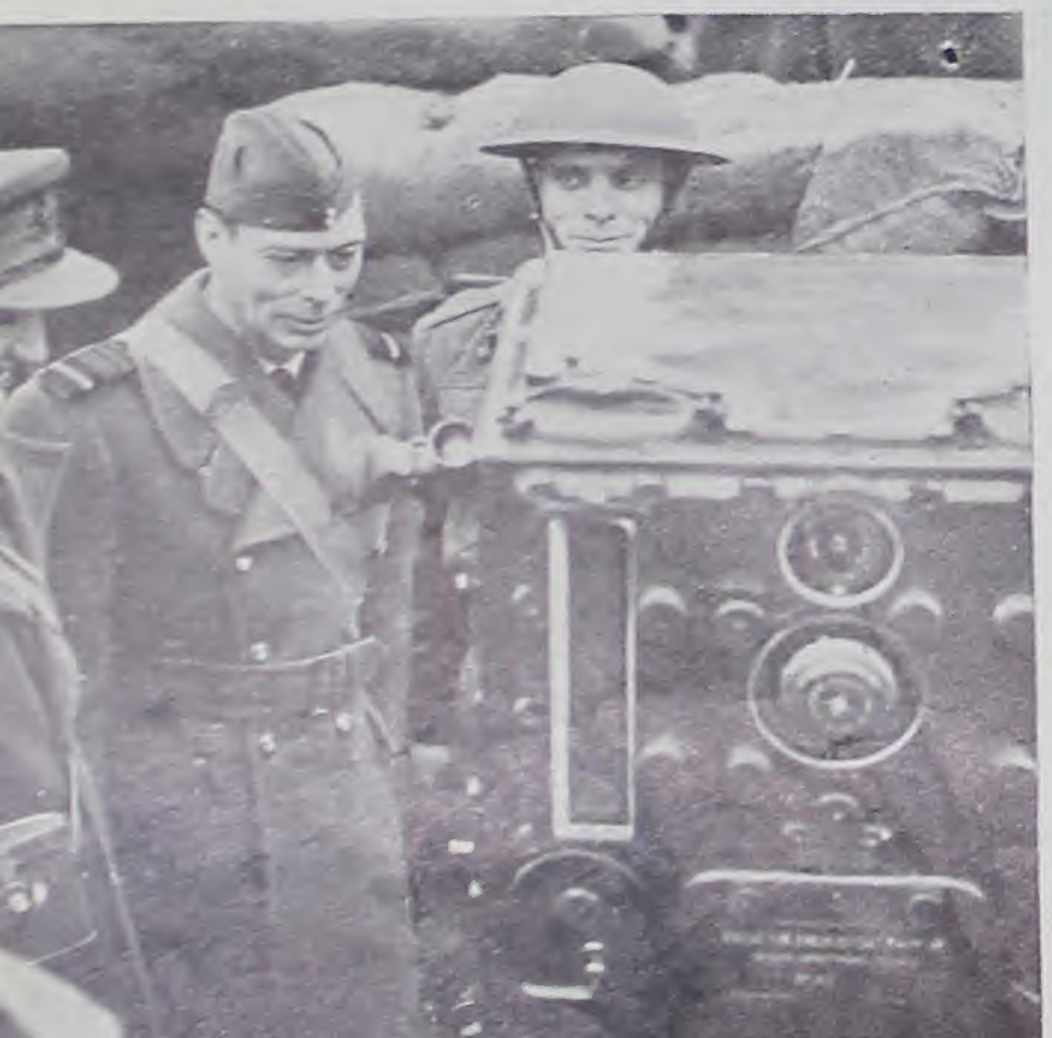
British Official Photograph : Crown Copyright

Few details were revealed of the men or of their achievement, but it was understood that the units concerned were drawn from famous county regiments of the English Midlands, and that they were being increasingly engaged on patrol work in the most advanced lines of the defensive zone. Certain it was that they were not manning any of the vast subterranean fortresses of the Maginot Line ; for that work men of special qualifications and long training are required, and these must be of necessity drawn from the ranks of the French ally. The British troops, in fact, were far out in front of these bastions of concrete and steel, out on the fringe of "No-man's-land," in a wilderness of wire and shell-holes, of abandoned villages and isolated farms which may have been occupied last night by British or French, but tonight will echo with the voices of Fritzes—or Fricordins, as the poilu calls them. There was no "line" in the sense that the word was used in the last war, but an elastic system of rifle pits, machine-gun emplacements, control and observation posts.

THE KING'S VISIT TO THE WESTERN FRONT

These photographs, taken during the King's tour of inspection of the Western Front, show : above, His Majesty accompanied by General Gamelin, receiving the salute of French troops ; below left, the King being shown the working of a predictor ; below right, mounting to the top of a concrete defence work ; in the circle, His Majesty, followed by Lord Gort, being piped ashore from a destroyer.

Photos, Planet News ; British Official Photographs : Crown Copyright







By day there was little to show that the landscape was one of war. Farmers might be seen working in their fields; there were still chimneys that gave forth a cheerful smoke; cows—than which nothing surely can be more peaceful—grazed in the fields. Houses and hamlets, farms and villages seemed to doze, for, though they gave small sign of movement, they were for the most part undamaged by the hail of shell or bomb.

But that picture of curious inactivity was deceptive. Behind the shuttered windows armed men kept ceaseless watch, and peered from amidst the bells in the church towers. The bridges across the streams and rivers, the crossroads, the entrances to the village, the doorstep of a solitary house—all might be (and frequently were) mined, ready to be exploded by contact or fired from a distance. And if during the day there was little movement and few soldiers of either army to be seen, at night Briton and German played a deadly game of hide-and-seek in the dark or by the light of the winter moon, dodging here and there, tracking down the enemy, and being tracked down in turn—hunter and hunted, often at one and the same time. It was a warfare reminiscent of the Red Indians of the Wild West, a warfare of patrol and skirmish, of trap and ambush, in which the "scalps" that counted were prisoners carried off and casualties inflicted on an enemy taken by surprise.

Between the Lines

At first the British soldiers engaged in these nocturnal prowlings were guided by French poilus who knew every ditch and gully, every building and coppice and wood, but soon they "found their feet" and proved themselves proficient in one of the most difficult and dangerous ways of making war. As soon as dark fell the khaki-clad patrols climbed over the parapet and crawled out through the gaps in the wire into the unknown. They moved here and there, searched houses and villages whose civilian population had long since been evacuated, ever on the look-out for traces of the passage of their opposite numbers in the German ranks. Always they had to be on the very tip-top of alertness, with hands ready to shoot and eyes keen for the slightest suggestion of a well-placed "booby trap" such as both sides delighted to plant.



THE FIRST KILLED

Corporal T. W. Priday (above), of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, was the first British soldier to be killed in action in the war. He was killed on December 9, 1939, while leading a patrol towards the German lines.

Photo, Sport & General

About a week after the King returned to England the B.E.F. suffered its first battlefield casualties in this war. "The British now have their wounded and even their dead on French soil once again," ran the French communiqué, and it was semi-officially announced in Paris later that the casualties had been incurred in a skirmish in the neighbourhood of Buschdorf, near the Luxemburg frontier, and that the men engaged were Midlanders who were out on patrol when they came in contact with a German band on a similar mission. Then it was that for the first time since the end of the Great War in 1918 Briton and German were at death grips, wielding rifle and hand-grenade in the night that enshrouded "No-man's-land." A night or two later there was a similar skirmish: shots were exchanged and bombs thrown, all with a view to taking prisoners from whom vital information might be extracted.

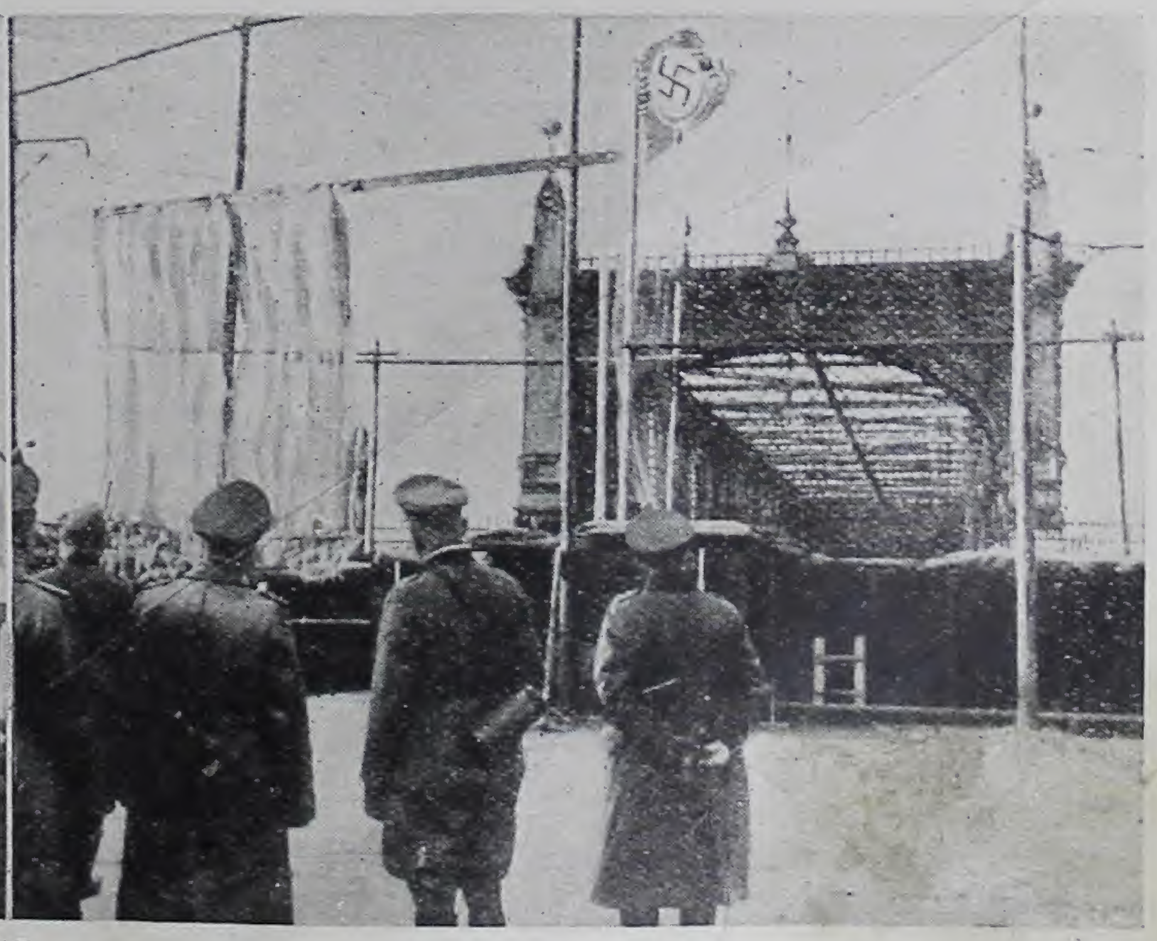
One of the British wounded in these night reconnaissances was a sergeant-major of sixteen years' Army service, and when Mr. Douglas Williams of the "Daily Telegraph" went to see him

BRIDGE BETWEEN BELLIGERENTS

This is the Kehl bridge, which spans the Rhine at Strasbourg. On the left is the French side of the bridge, showing the blockhouses commanding the approach. (See also page 173.) The device surmounting the left-hand blockhouse is the badge of the Régiment du Bas-Rhin. On the right is the German side of the bridge, showing similar protective measures and camouflage netting.

Photos, Associated Press





in the whitewashed ward of a French hospital in a town behind the Maginot Line, he had an interesting story to tell.

On the night in question he had received orders to take out on patrol a small party of a Midland regiment. It was bitterly cold, with occasional flurries of snow, and pitch dark. Wearing warm leather jerkins over their battle dress and high rubber boots, and armed with rifles and hand grenades, the little party left the security of their own lines and went out into " No-man's-land," worming their way over rough ground, crawling through holes half-filled with water, and now and again having to stop to cut the wire against which they bumped in the dark. Keeping their direction by a radium-illuminated compass, they made excellent progress in their patrol until they reached a gully, when, all of a sudden, a mine went up. Several of the party were wounded, including the sergeant-major. Although bleeding profusely from a number of small wounds in the head and shoulders, the latter rallied his men and at once pushed on to see if any Germans were around. A volley was fired into the dark, but no reply was forthcoming, so they returned to attend to their wounded. A man was dispatched to company headquarters to ask for stretcher-bearers, and pending their arrival they made ready to return the way they had come. The wounded were carefully bundled into greatcoats and carried by four men, each holding a corner of the coat, across the uneven and treacherous ground until they encountered the relief party. So with the wounded sergeant-major at its head the little party made its way across two miles of mud and water. Every twenty or thirty yards a brief halt was made to rest the bearers and to give the wounded a relief from the involuntary jolting. At last, just as dawn was breaking, the party threaded the wire that lay before the British positions and, wearied but by no means down-hearted, tumbled into their advanced lines.



GERMAN PRISONERS IN FRANCE

At roll-call a German N.C.O. assembles the men under his charge and reports to one of the French camp officers, who, according to custom, returns his salute. These men, in a French prisoner-of-war camp, fared better than many of their compatriots who languished in German concentration camps.

Photo, Courtesy of the French Embassy

It was on December 19 that the first announcement of the death from wounds of a member of the B.E.F. was issued. The name was that of Lieut. P. C. S. Milward, who died of wounds on December 16. Later it was stated that the first British soldier killed in action was Corporal Thomas William Priday, who fell while leading a patrol on December 9. The French losses in the first three months of war on the West were stated by M. Daladier just before Christmas to be 1,136 soldiers and 42 airmen. How different from 1914, when by Christmas Britain and France had to mourn the loss of over half-a-million of brave lives! No fact could be more eloquent of the extraordinary difference in the opening stages of the First Great War and of the Second.

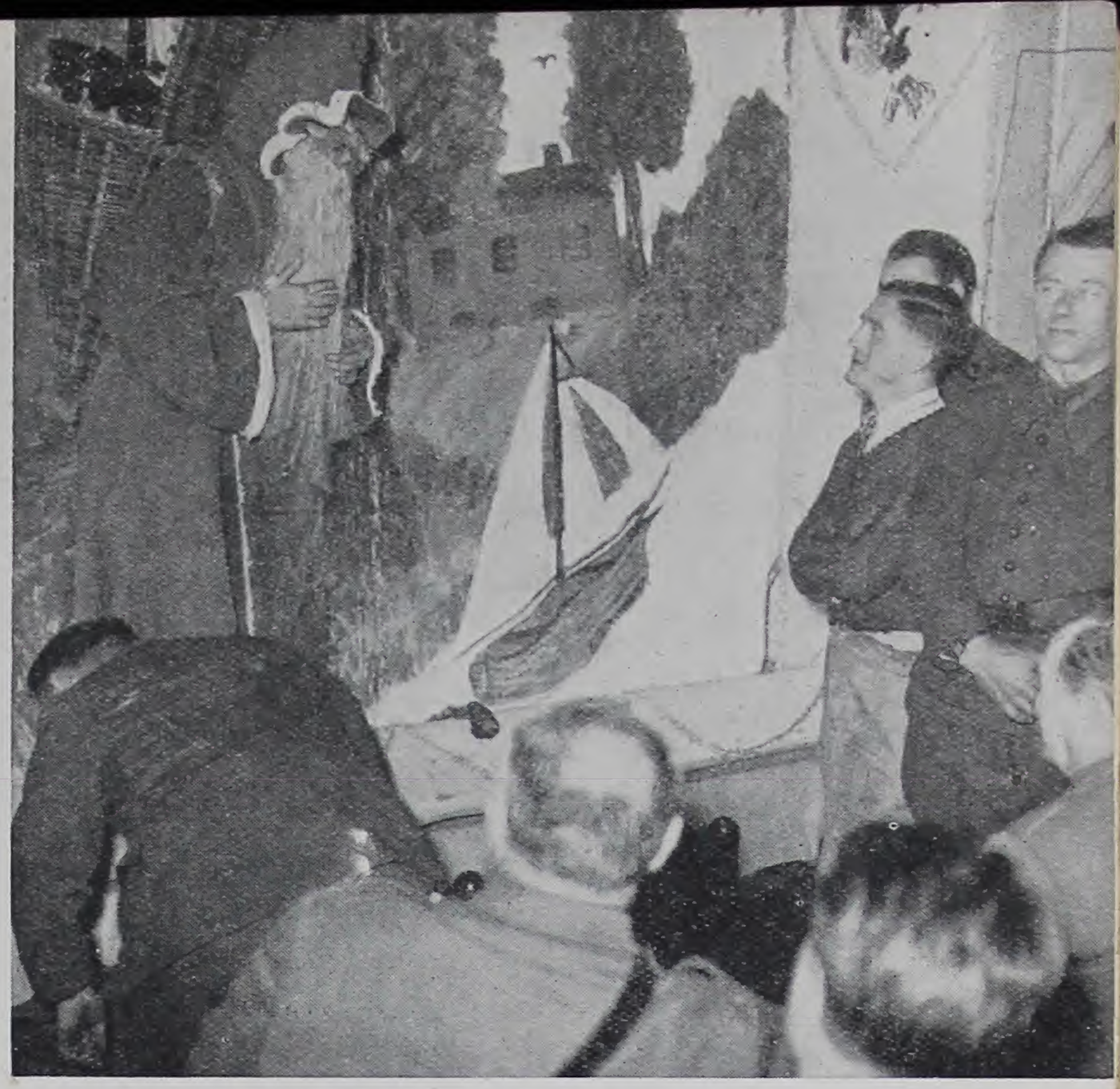
Far truer of 1939 than at any time between 1914 and 1918 was it to say that it was " All quiet on the Western Front." The great offensive, so often threatened by the enemy, so long anticipated and so carefully prepared for by the Allies, tarried. Day after day, night after night, the French and British sentinels peered across the fields that separated them from the German outposts, and still the grey-clad hordes did not come. Those who knew of what would meet them if once they left their lines—the withering, unwithstandable fire of artillery and machine-gun, of Bren and rifle—could not find it in their hearts to blame the foe's inactivity. But all the same it was definitely boring. " We came out here for a war," the Bishop of Fulham was told during a visit to the front, " and we want to know when it is going to begin."

Watch and Wait

In combating this sense of boredom excellent work was done by the Entertainments National Service Association (E.N.S.A.) in association with the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (N.A.A.F.I.). Cinema units and companies of theatrical and music-hall artistes went to France and put on excellent programmes, which were accorded the most sincere and whole-hearted appreciation.

There were some who urged that something should be done to break in military fashion what they described as the " stalemate " on the Western Front. This view was effectively countered by M. Daladier in his address to the French Chamber on November 30. " Contrary to all forecasts," he said, " military operations have not yet developed with that violence and that vast and brutal extension over wide fronts which they seemed likely to assume. But," went on the Premier, " we ought not to take this initiative. This war is to us a war for our security and our liberty. Our rule for those who defend us is economy in blood and economy in suffering. Conquerors launched out on adventure can sacrifice





CHRISTMAS ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Although it is difficult to reconcile the "good will" sentiments of Christmas with warfare, the traditional festival brought some moments of cheer into the dangerous and often monotonous existence of the soldiers at the Front. Our photographs show how soldiers of the German (above), French (right) and British (below) armies kept the Christmas of 1939 in unaccustomed surroundings, far from their own folks.

Photos, Keystone; Courtesy of the French Embassy; British Official Photograph: Crown Copyright





THE PREMIER SEES FOR HIMSELF

Mr. Neville Chamberlain is seen above, during a tour of the Western Front, inspecting a British field gun in its camouflaged emplacement. On his return to London, the Premier praised the B.E.F. and said : " I am simply amazed at the progress they have made."

British Official Photograph : Crown Copyright

hundreds and thousands of men in mad offensives. Those who defend their soil and their liberty are careful to avoid as far as possible the sacrifice of human lives. Such is the rule of our Government and the chiefs of our Armies. Yet while husbanding the blood of Frenchmen we are accumulating without truce or respite powerful means which give us the certainty of being able to break their assaults and which would permit us, if necessary, to attack at the right moment with the minimum of losses and the certainty of success."

It was during this state of semi-war, in which the huge armies frowned at one another from behind massive fortifications and the only fighting was between patrols and outposts in the indeterminate wastes that lay between the rival lines, that Christmas of 1939 dawned. Heavy frost covered the countryside with rime, and the men on duty in the outposts strained their eyes to see through billowing banks of fog. The guns were mostly silent, though for some days past an artillery duel had been intermittent. Behind the line in their billets and log huts and encampments the British troops had traditional Christmas fare and a bumper mail of letters and parcels, and even just behind the outposts held by the British in their sector of the Maginot Line there was a turkey for every thirty-two men and a Christmas pudding for every sixteen—ready-cooked, of course, for in those exposed positions, within sight of the enemy, no fires were permitted.

Amongst the French Christmas passed in the same peaceful fashion. The great guns roared now and again, but there were no infantry attacks. In the huge subterranean forts of the Maginot Line and in the churches of the little villages in the rear, midnight Mass was celebrated by priests who in this war as in the last found their duty at the front. Champagne, hot wine, cigars, thousands and thousands of parcels, Christmas trees, cinematograph shows, and even miracle plays in which the actors were men in uniform—these were the incidentals in the French celebrations of the festival of Noel.

General Gamelin, Supreme Commander of the Allied Armies, issued two special Christmas messages to the troops. The first, dated from General Headquarters on December 23, ran : " On the approach of the New Year the Commander-in-Chief sends to the whole army his most affectionate greetings. The brilliant actions of the forces, the immense labours of our cause are gauges of success."

In the second the Generalissimo addressed the British Army. " Soldiers of the British Empire," it ran, " and particularly you who are serving in France under Lord Gort, I send you the very warm Christmas greetings of your comrades of the French Armies. The festival of Christmas stands for the future, and our effort in this way is creating the future. That future will be what we all mean it to be, for the courage of our men is unconquerable."

Then we may quote the message of good cheer to the peoples of the Empire by Lord Gort. " Once more," he said, " within the memory of many of us, a British Expeditionary Force is spending Christmas in France, and once again under the leadership of a great soldier of France the Allied Armies stand united to resist aggression. In the year that lies ahead difficulties and dangers will undoubtedly arise, . . . but they will be surmounted owing, on the one hand, to the close understanding which today exists between the French nation and ourselves, and, on the other hand, to the knowledge that your thoughts are with us at all times .... In whatever part of the Empire you may dwell I extend to you all cordial good wishes for Christmas and the New Year."

So the year 1939 drew to a close: four months had passed during which the opposing forces had never got to real grips. In the opening weeks the German military machine had been fully occupied in crushing Polish resistance—and the French were able to complete their mobilization and to man the Maginot Line. But it was inconceivable that Germany would stay her hand for long. The possible (and probable) strategic alternatives in a Franco-German war were familiar to any officer who had passed through a staff college of a European military service. The Germans themselves, in the years since the war of 1914–18, had virtually charted the course of an advance on France. Even in the French Press, at this period, probable Nazi moves had been predicted.

Presumably Gamelin had made the requisite dispositions to meet these contingencies, though he was at a disadvantage as far as the Franco-Belgian frontier was concerned, for co-operation between France and Belgium had not been arranged by any formal Staff pourparlers, if indeed it had been officially discussed at all. The French frontier on that side lay open to an invader who chose to violate Belgian neutrality, for only comparatively weak defences had been built on the stretch from Montmédy to the Channel coast. Belgium herself, anxious to preserve scrupulous neutrality, had frowned upon the construction of anything stronger.



DESTRUCTION WROUGHT IN BORDERLINE BATTLES

In the upper photograph two French soldiers are keeping watch from the windows of a ruined house on the Moselle front, while a third guards the cellar passage. At the bottom (left), the unfortunate fate of a house in a German village caught between two fires. Right, a "booby trap" found by the French, consisting of hand grenades attached to a cart. Such traps were numerous in No-man's-land.

Photos, Keystone

Historic Documents. LXXIII and LXXIV

TO THE WOMEN OF THE ALLIED PEOPLES

With many fields of national service open to them, women joined energetically in the prosecution of the War, and to these active participants the Queen paid tribute in her broadcast on November 11, 1939. With perhaps even more sympathy did Her Majesty and Mrs. Chamberlain—speaking to the women of France—acclaim the quiet courage of those who carried on at home, enduring separation and the monotony and petty hardships of the daily round.

THE last time I broadcast a message was at Halifax, Nova Scotia, when I said a few words of farewell to all the women and children who had welcomed the King and myself so kindly during our visits to Canada and the United States of America.

The world was then at peace, and for seven happy weeks we had moved in an atmosphere of such good will and human kindliness that the very idea of strife and bloodshed seemed impossible The recollection of it still warms my heart and gives me courage.

I speak today in circumstances sadly different. For twenty years we have kept this day of remembrance as one consecrated to the memory of past and never-to-be-forgotten sacrifice, and now the peace which that sacrifice made possible has been broken, and once again we have been forced into war.

I know that you would wish me to voice, in the name of the women of the British Empire, our deep and abiding sympathy with those on whom the first cruel and shattering blows have fallen—the women of Poland. Nor do we forget the gallant womanhood of France, who are called on to share with us again the hardships and sorrows of war.

War has at all times called for the fortitude of women. Even in other days, when it was an affair of the fighting forces only, wives and mothers at home suffered constant anxiety for their dear ones, and too often the misery of bereavement. Their lot was all the harder because they felt that they could do so little beyond heartening, through their own courage and devotion, the men at the front.

Now this is all changed, for we, no less than men, have real and vital work to do To us also is given the proud privilege of serving our country in her hour of need.

The call has come, and from my heart I thank you, the women of our great Empire, for the way that you have answered it. The tasks that you have undertaken, whether at home or in distant lands, cover every field of national service, and I would like to pay my tribute to all of you who are giving such splendid and unselfish help in this time of trouble.

Courage in Facing Monotonous Duties

AT the same time I do not forget the humbler part which so many of you have to play in these trying times. I know that it is not so difficult to do the big things. The novelty, the excitement of the new and interesting duties have an exhilaration of their own. But these tasks are not for every woman. It is the thousand and one worries and irritations in carrying on wartime life in ordinary homes which are so often hard to bear.

Many of you have had to see your family life broken up —your husband going off to his allotted task—your children evacuated to places of greater safety. The King and I know what it means to be parted from our children, and we can sympathize with those of you who have bravely consented to this separation for the sake of your little ones.

Equally do we appreciate the hospitality shown by those of you who have opened your homes to strangers and to children sent from places of special danger. All this, I know has meant sacrifice, and I would say to those who are feeling the strain : Be assured that in carrying on your home duties and meeting all these worries cheerfully, you are giving real service to the country.

You are taking your part in keeping the home front which will have dangers of its own, stable and strong.

It is, after all, for our homes and for their security that we are fighting, and we must see to it that, despite all the difficulty of these days, our homes do not lose those very qualities which make them the background as well as the joy of our lives.

Women of all lands yearn for the day when it will be possible to set about building a new and better world, where peace and good will shall abide. That day must come.

Meantime to all of you, in every corner of the Empire, who are doing such fine work in all our services, or who are carrying on at home amidst the trials of these days, I would give a message of hope and encouragement.

We have all a part to play and I know you will not fail in yours, remembering always that the greater your courage and devotion, the sooner shall we see again in our midst the happy ordered life for which we long.

Only when we have won through to an enduring peace shall we be free to work unhindered for the greater happiness and well-being of all mankind.

We put our trust in God Who is our refuge and strength in all times of trouble. I pray with all my heart that He may bless and guide and keep you always.

MRS. CHAMBERLAIN IN A BROADCAST TO THE WOMEN OF FRANCE, DECEMBER 31, 1939 :

TODAY our two countries are sharing the trials and sorrows of war. I am convinced that the feelings of friendship which already bind us together have gained a new depth and a new force by the sacrifices which we are both being called upon to make on behalf of a cause which is in effect that of all humanity. The past four months have brought to many of you hardships, and separation from those you love. For some among you, as among the women of England, this New Year will be darkened by mourning for those who have made the supreme sacrifice for their country. To these I would say, we know that their loss is not and will not be in vain for they will have helped to make secure the future for our children.

I would like to send my special greetings to those who have been compelled for the time being to leave their homes in the Eastern Provinces or in other dangerous areas. We know here from our own personal experience how many serious problems are set up by this necessary transfer of population. But whether you are in your own homes or billeted in those of others, whether you are looking after your family or are engaged in work on the land, in industry, or the service of the State, you are playing an essential part in the National Defence and you must feel happy in knowing that you are making your contribution to the final victory.

We in this country admire the wonderful spirit which inspires your husbands, your brothers, and your sons, who are defending their country on land, on the sea, and in the air. We share your pride in their achievements and we are grateful for the part they are playing in the common cause. . . .

I receive many letters not only from French mothers and wives but also from French soldiers. These letters help me to understand something of your intimate thoughts, and I have learned how much your fortitude and your courage sustain your fighting men. That indomitable fortitude has always been one of your most noble characteristics. . . .

My husband, in describing to me his visit to France just before Christmas . . . . spoke of the courage of the women of France and of the great kindness which you are showing to our soldiers. Such kindness of heart is a bond which draws even more closely together the women of our two countries.

WAR has always meant for women hardship and sorrow, and modern war brings to every one of us some measure of suffering or worry, but we bear these with fortitude because we can look forward with confidence to the triumph of our cause ; and in that day when victory is ours and we have won through to an enduring peace it will be our common aim to work together for the happiness and well-being of mankind.

Chapter 38

WOMEN'S EFFORT IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE WAR: A MAGNIFICENT RALLY

Women Rallied to the Call even Before War Broke Out—Vital Work in the A.R.P. Services—The Auxiliary Territorial Service—Women in the R.A.F. and R.N. Auxiliaries—Firewomen of the A.F.S.—Ambulance Drivers—Women's Voluntary Services—Hospital Ships on the Thames—The Land Army—First Aid and Nursing Services—Work in the Canteens

WOMEN love peace perhaps even more than men. War means so much to them: the loss, probably, of their nearest and dearest, the wrecking of their home; yet they enter into war work with even more fervour than the men. Is it because they are still new to it? Just as the child is so proud to have a tiny dust-pan and brush because she feels she is doing something real to help—the dust-pan and brush have not yet become the symbol of toil—so the women in the War Services look not at the toil but at the symbol which they are so proud to wield.

They worked so hard preparing for the war that women drivers in the Auxiliary Territorial Service who went to camp in August, 1939, had to go to bed for a day before returning to their normal occupations! The officers of the A.T.S. were thankful for that week or fortnight in camp which about half of the force experienced. In it the women came into touch with real Army life; they learned to use the Army cooking utensils, which are quite different from those in a modern flat; they got used to sleeping on Army "biscuits."

The W.A.A.F.

In preparation for war 48 Royal Air Force Companies of the A.T.S. were in July, 1939, invited to join the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. Thereupon they abandoned the name "Wrafs," which the Women's Royal Air Force had borne in the war of 1914–18. The "Waacs" had already been consigned to the history of the First Great War, and the "Ats" had taken their place; the "Wrens" alone survived. Eagerly the "Wrens" of the last war read the Admiralty's announcement in the spring of 1939 that a new W.R.N.S. was to be formed. Their hopes of serving the Navy again, however, were doomed for the majority at the outset. The new service was only for women living near the big naval ports, and the age limit was 18–50. The outbreak of war, therefore, found but a nucleus service working at the ports.

The firewomen were the first women in uniform to attract the attention of Londoners before the war began. As early as April, 1939, clad in smart navy doubled-breasted jackets with silver buttons, and wearing ski-ing caps having the A.F.S. badge in red, they made many recruits outside County Hall beside the Auxiliary Fire Brigade during the L.C.C. jubilee celebrations.

Some of them had actually enrolled in the spring of 1938, and the September crisis increased their numbers; but it was in July, 1939, that recruiting became really fast. Mobilization on September 1 found a body of keen firewomen ready trained, for they had given their spare time to making themselves proficient. Later they numbered 4,500 full-time and 1,117 part-time auxiliaries in London alone. In their preparations they were but part of the great Air Raid Precaution Army. The Women Auxiliary Ambulance drivers had passed their test in spare time more than a year before war began. They had been to first-aid lectures; they had driven in the dark without lights. When war was declared, all they had to do was to don their trousers and take regular shifts night and day at their garages.

The first-aid lectures were given in those early days in the street beside an ambulance. One of the number acted as patient, selecting her own ailment; and after being given attention, she was driven to the nearest hospital. The ambulances for the most part were tradesmen's carts fitted up with stretchers.

Boredom did not hit the ambulance drivers so hard as some of the workers who waited for air raids which did not come. Taxi-cab drivers were attached to each London ambulance station in



'ATS' AT WORK IN AN ARMOURY *Photo, G.P.U.*

Succeeding the once-famous "Waacs," the "Ats," as the women of the Auxiliary Territorial Service were called, helped the country by releasing men in the Army from many routine duties. Above, two "Ats" are seen in an armoury, one cleaning a rifle with a regulation pull-through, and the other adjusting an anti-tank rifle.



WOMEN SERVANTS OF THE NATIONAL CAUSE

From the beginning of the war Queen Elizabeth set an example to the women of the nation, and every woman's work for the war received her encouragement. On the left she is seen sewing with members of the Household Staff at Buckingham Palace. Below, Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal (at the head of the table) is seen at work with some ladies of Harewood, making hospital supplies.

Photos, Keystone ; Topical Press ; Universal Pictorial Press ; British International Photos ; Sport & General







Above, left, Mrs. Laughton Mathews, leader of the Women's Royal Naval Service ; on right, Lady Beryl Oliver, chief of the V.A.D. Below, left, Dame Joanna Cruickshank, Matron-in-Chief of the British Red Cross and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem ; centre, Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, Commandant of the Auxiliary Territorial Service ; right, Miss K. J. Trefusis Forbes, Director of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.









'WRENS' IN AN HISTORIC SETTING

Above, members of the Women's Royal Naval Service are seen at lunch in the famous Painted Hall of the Naval College at Greenwich, from which many Admiral heroes of the past have graduated.
Photo, Fox

order to teach the women drivers knowledge of London, and great were the arguments! The women, who had all driven their own cars in London, thought privately that they knew their way about just as well as the taxi-men. The men were the teachers, however, and they felt bound to stick to what they called their "rout" in spite of the arguments of the ladies.

A kind of exhilaration possessed women during the first few days of the war, for they felt they were wanted. Had not the Home Secretary invited the Dowager Lady Reading, in June, 1938, to form the biggest women's organization ever known for civil defence? Were not the three Women's National Services already organized, called into being by the Navy, the Army, and the Royal Air Force? Looking back to 1914, women remembered that it was then two solid years before they had had Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps, and three years before the Women's Land Army was allowed.

It is true that in September, 1939, over 5,000 business and professional women were on the register of the Women's Employment Federation awaiting war work, but Mrs. Oliver Strachey, the Secretary, said:

"At any rate, prejudice is not holding up the work as it did in 1914. After the last war I think the Government realized that women, both paid and unpaid, were a reserve of strength, and they thought they would use it straight away this time.

"The change in the attitude of the Government is strikingly illustrated by the inclusion of women for the first time in the Army Medical Corps. Almost on the exact parallel date that the announcement was made, in 1939, that women doctors were to have the same rank and pay as men in the R.A.M.C., Dr. Elsie Inglis in 1914 went to the War Office and offered her services with those of other medical women. The Chief of the Medical Service said in effect: 'My dear lady, the best thing you can do is to go home and keep quiet!'"

At the outbreak of war Women's Voluntary Services numbered 370,000 members, and the Government and the local authorities were already using them for the evacuation of children and mothers and hospital patients. During the first month of the war over 96,000 volunteers were enrolled, bringing the total since June, 1938, up to nearly half a million. A one-way passage had to be arranged at the London headquarters for the 11,000 volunteers in September. As many as 1,000 women were interviewed in a day, and either enrolled for civil defence work or passed on to their appropriate service.

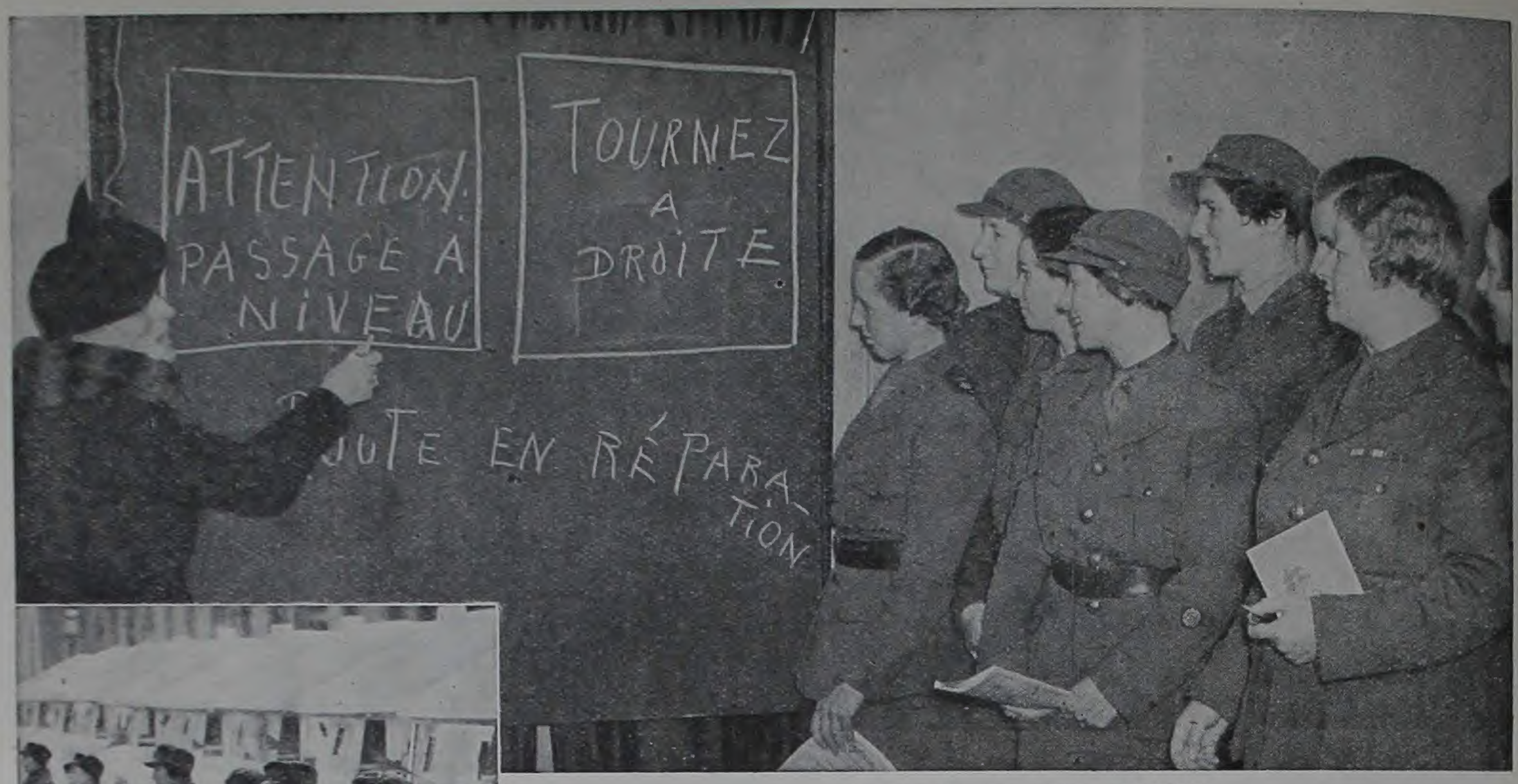
There was work in plenty for the leisured woman or the woman who could work without pay. During the war of 1914–18 it had been the industrial women who were in distress, and the Queen's Work for Women Fund had to provide workrooms for them. This time it was the business and professional women for whom special registers had to be opened—but with very little result, because of lack of work. The British Federation of Business and Professional Women collected reports of unemployment and evidence of hardships resulting from the war.

Visiting teachers of art, music, etc., were left behind in towns from which children were evacuated. Their rents, of course, went on, and they were faced with the maintenance, sometimes, of dependants. Between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of a membership of 11,500 of the Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics were thrown out of employment. Nine hundred full-time professional artistes, of whom half



READY TO ANSWER THE CALL

Women members of the Auxiliary Fire Service stand by day and night for emergency calls. These girls are on duty in the telephone control room at a London fire station.
Photo, Keystone





WOMEN AT THE WHEEL

The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry was founded in 1910, and "Fannys," as its members were inevitably called, did indeed "yeoman" service during the war of 1914-18. 1939 found them ready once again, and on the left Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, is seen inspecting members of a F.A.N.Y. Ambulance Unit before their departure for Finland in ambulances provided by the Canadian Red Cross. Above, women of a Motor Transport Training Corps are being given an explanation of French traffic signs they are likely to encounter.

Photos, Fox; L.N.A.

were women, lost their employment on the outbreak of war.

Secretaries, book-keepers, and other people holding office positions of trust were dismissed wholesale, in most cases with only a week's salary. A large percentage of housekeepers and hotel and institution manageresses lost their posts. These and other cases of hardship were presented to seven women M.P.s at the House of Commons on November 22 by a deputation, organized by the British Federation of Business and Professional Women, of 14 professional groups representing about 30,000 women. Miss Caroline Haslett, the chairman, and Mrs. Howard Roberts, the hon. secretary, led them. It was a meeting that drew the business women together. Lady Astor, in the chair, invited them to meet for discussion at her home once a month. The women M.P.s decided to ask the Minister of Labour to meet them and discuss the unemployment of business and professional women. Mr. Ernest Brown accepted at once, and on November 28 an informal meeting took place in the House of Commons. As a result, both the women M.P.s and the Federation were satisfied that when work for which business or professional women were eligible became available in the national services, preference would be given to women who had lost employment through the war. Further, the women's representatives felt that they had impressed upon the Minister that business women should have special consideration at Employment Exchanges. The Minister proposed to have a supplementary register for men and women of business or professional type, and this was discussed with the Federation.

Women's special contribution to the promotion of the war is in two main directions:

(*a*) in releasing men by the Women's Services; and (*b*) in the performance of work which only women can do.

The Auxiliary Territorial Service aims at releasing soldiers from any work a woman can do. They take over the cook-house, even with the great old-fashioned ovens and cauldrons, stone floors, and steps leading up to it. The "Ats" take over the cleaning, under the proud name of Orderlies; they act the part of kitchenmaids and housemaids. Those who have been parlourmaids are detailed to wait on the officers.

The "Ats" also look after the stores, fitting the men with boots and other equipment, as well as the women. Office routine is so different in the Army that a three weeks' course of training is given the clerical company of the A.T.S. at the headquarters of the Eastern Command. They learn, for instance, that in the army a letter is never addressed "Dear Sir"; it is always in memorandum form. They have become familiar with a variety of forms.

Women motor drivers relieve the men of driving the lighter lorries and transport vans; they drive officers and take messages. In their spare time the drivers attend a course of instruction on maintenance and repairs.

All kinds of women have enrolled: leisured girls, buyers in shops and shop assistants, dressmakers, hairdressers, factory girls and domestic workers, actresses, and teachers. They are treated very much as soldiers, and it is their pride that it is so. Rations are the same as for men, but women have four-fifths of the men's ration; the pay is two-thirds of that of the corresponding army rank. Leave is the

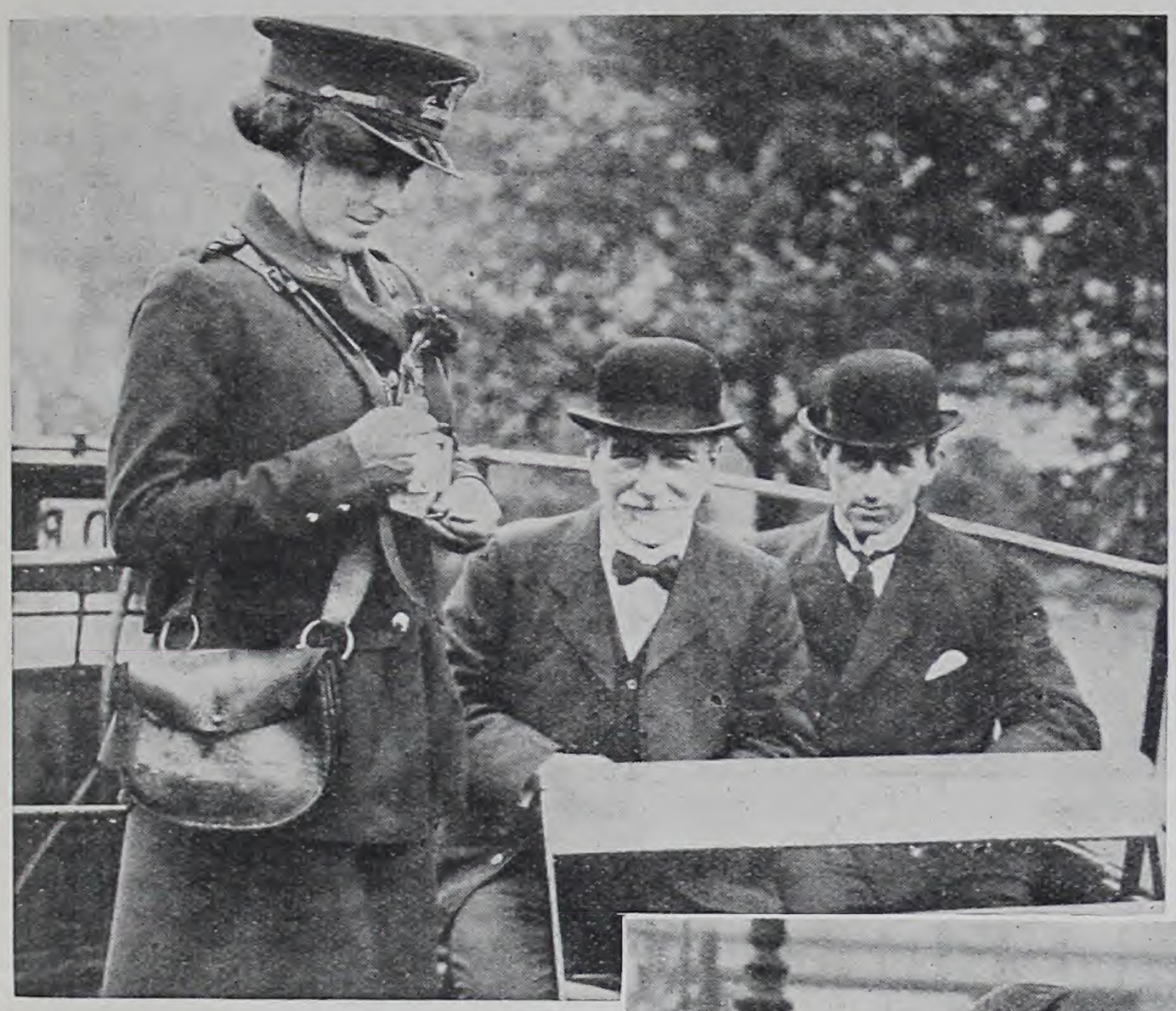




A GENERATION APART

In 1939, as twenty-five years before, the women of Britain gladly carried on the work of their menfolk called overseas. The spirit of the country had not changed, but the fashions had, as we see by comparing the photographs on the left showing the postwomen of 1914–18 and of 1940.





WOMEN WARTIME WORKERS

Certainly the bus "conductress" of 1940 is a smarter figure than her predecessor of a generation before, as can be seen by the two photographs above, but they both put the same "punch" into their work. Even the more muscular jobs are not the exclusive prerogative of men, and the "weaker sex" shows to good advantage in wartime—as the photographs of women porters (1914 and 1940) on the right testify

Photos, Fox; Topical Press

same. The freedom of the service is very remarkable and the attitude of the officers is modern and democratic. Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, the Director, was Chief Controller of the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps in France in 1917, and later she directed the Women's Royal Air Force. She understands young people and she has selected officers with the same quality. Miss K. J. Trefusis Forbes, Director of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, was one of her officers in the A.T.S. She commanded her own R.A.F. Company. Then, when the Women's Auxiliary Air Force was formed in June, 1939, a leader was ready. During the former war Miss Trefusis Forbes was in the Women's Volunteer Reserve.

The W.A.A.F. relieve the men only on ground duties; they are not allowed to fly. In spite of that drawback 7,000 women enrolled during the first week of the war. They are not attached as a body to the R.A.F., but directly take the places of men who go to the Front. Some thousands of airwomen are on air stations all over Britain.

Besides acting as cooks and orderlies, clerks and transport drivers, the women are trained as instrument mechanics. They are also teleprinter operators, telephone operators, dental surgery attendants, and sick quarters attendants. There is little that the men do that the women cannot—except fly. They are proud to be with the balloon squadrons even though it is only as cooks, clerks, and fabric workers. They are paid two-thirds of the men's pay and have four-fifths of the men's rations.

For two weeks the W.A.A.F. recruits are at a training depot, where they are drilled by a sergeant of the R.A.F. as well as their own sub-officers, and they learn the discipline of the service. The airwoman's uniform is the same colour and cut as the airman's.

The W.R.N.S. is a shore service, but it is very nautical. The hostels at the ports are named after ships, and the Wrens call the kitchen the galley, while food is "victuals." Stewards "clear the decks" after a meal, and invalids go to the "sick-bay." The Wrens act as cooks and stewards for ratings and officers. They work also with the admiral and his staff in clerical and secretarial capacities. The Wrens do signalling with a petty officer, and store-keeping with the naval stores officer. A woman acts as a naval postman, and collects and delivers letters to and from the ships. The Wrens who are drivers victual the ships, transport buoys and ropes, and even explosives in the armament car. The girls know no fear and drive ambulances or vans on to the pier even at night, collecting casualties or stores.



NEW FORESTS IN THE MAKING

In wartime vast areas of woodland are cut down for timber, especially for pit props, and seedling trees must be cultivated to make good the losses. Above, members of the Women's Land Army are seen covering seedlings to protect them from the frost at a nursery in Monmouthshire.

Photo. Fox

Like the other women's services, the Wrens have a smart uniform. It has a double-breasted navy coat cut like that of a naval officer. The old type of admiral's hat has been retained for the officers, but the ratings wear a round hat with up-turned sides encircled by a ribbon with the name of their ship.

Mrs. Laughton Mathews, the Director of the W.R.N.S., was the first officer to be trained in the service during the last war. Officers have a fortnight's course at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

Sea-loving girls jumped at the opportunity offered by the Port of London Authority to man the hospital ships on the Thames. Theirs was no play time task. They slept one night on board ship and one night on land. Coming aboard sometimes meant climbing twenty feet on iron ladders and crossing over perhaps six barges. The hospital ships were the Thames pleasure steamers, and they were just off the summer run when war broke out. The first thing the girls had to do was to clean them. The crew showed them how to coil ropes and put a bucket over the side. The girls made special application to the P.L.A. for brass polish.

Manning the River

Exercises were held daily in taking off casualties from barges and rendering first aid. Assisting the medical officer on each ship were three fully trained nurses and ten nursing auxiliaries, two sea-rangers, and two ex-army sergeants.

First-aid posts on land under the Red Cross and St. John War Organization were dotted every few yards in the streets of London. They were in odd and interesting places—St. James's Palace, the House of Lords, an old stable. To each were attached one trained nurse enrolled under the Civil Nursing Reserve and a number of Auxiliary nurses. Everything was kept ready day after day for an emergency; lotions were remade; dressings sterilized. Practices were often held, when a volunteer in the street had splints put on and was carried by the stretcher party to the aid post.

Most posts had their own "dirty side" for gas casualties. String bags were ready for the patient in which to put his clothes, and a grease-proof bag for his valuables; a spray was provided where he could be thoroughly washed. Clean pyjamas were awaiting, a cloak and hood, and shoes, and a camp chair in which to rest.

Air Raid Wardens' posts, in which women play a large part, were just as numerous as the aid posts. They varied according to the borough, but the work was the same.



POWERFUL DEFENDER OF FRANCE'S FRONTIERS

In 1914 the French had excellent light field artillery, but were sadly deficient in heavy guns. In 1939 France's Army was provided with great numbers of artillery both light and heavy, and here a French 155-mm. gun is seen in its camouflaged gun-pit on the Western Front. It has been christened the "Lyne Clevers," in honour of a well-known music-hall artist.

Photo, Keystone



Photo

AIRMEN WHO PROVED THEIR WORTH

British bombers and German fighters came to grips in a great aerial battle off Heligoland on December 18, 1939, described in page 433. "The laurels go to the Wellington bombers," the official report justly observed, "for they resisted every effort by Germany's newest fighter 'planes (twin-engined Messerschmitt 110's) to break them up." Between 80 and 100 aircraft



& General

HEROES OF HELIGOLAND AIR BATTLE

were engaged in the battle. Seven British bombers failed to reach home, but though these 'planes were 100 miles an hour slower than their "fighter" opponents, they brought down at least six of the German aircraft (one British machine accounting for five of them). Here some of the British crews of the Wellingtons are seen back on their home aerodrome



FIRE DISCIPLINE ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Somewhere on the Western Front, in an emplacement hidden by netting camouflage and protected by sandbags, this British gun-crew, gas-masked and steel-helmeted, is carrying out a routine drill at night. Although the first months of the war were marked by comparative quiet and little enemy activity, the Allies relaxed none of their precautions, and the lull enabled training such as that here shown to be perfected.

British Official Photograph : Crown Copyright

In some districts women wardens patrolled the streets in pairs, in turn with the men. Girls manned the telephones at the control post, which is the nerve centre of the A.R.P.

Ambulance and Nursing Services

A nurses' department was set up by the Red Cross and St. John War Organization, with Dame Joanna Cruickshank as Matron-in-Chief. The first activity was to enrol trained nurses for the emergency, and great care was taken that they should be first-class nurses. Personnel were supplied to the Army Nursing Service, and nurses were in reserve for the R.A.F.

"A national service has been performed by nurses in their spare time, and by unemployed nurses," said Dame Joanna. "They have instructed and examined a very large number of women in Home Nursing, under the auspices of the Red Cross and St. John. Many of the students belong to the women's voluntary services."

Nurses have already been awarded medals for gallantry in the war. Commandant Vera Cave, Nurse Isabel Mary Juett, and Nurse Florence Edith Walker went to the assistance of a man who had fallen out of a train on rails which they thought were electrified. The Red Cross special service cross was also awarded to Mrs. Walters for giving aid to an injured pilot who crashed near an aerodrome on September 26.

Little was heard of the V.A.D.s during the opening months of war, but that was only because there had been few casualties. About 20,000 V.A.D.s under the direction of Dame Beryl Oliver were ready for any emergency.

The unity of all women in war work answers the call of the Queen in her broadcast on November 12, 1939 :

"We have all a part to play and I know you will not fail in yours, remembering always that the greater your courage and devotion, the sooner shall we see again in our midst the happy ordered life for which we long."

Her Majesty played her part valiantly from the beginning of the war. She said that the little Princesses "miss their Mummy and Daddy," but Her Majesty set an example to the mothers of the nation in not bringing her children back to London. She visited the evacuated children and had dinner with them. Every woman's work for the war received her encouragement. Although not a needlewoman, the Queen started a "Sewing Bee" at the Palace in order to aid the Red Cross.

Queen Mary, whose work in the war of 1914–18 can never be forgotten, is head of all military and naval nursing services. The maternity home for wives of officers of the three services was only one of the new war charities to which Queen Mary at once gave her interest and help.

The Princess Royal identified herself with the Auxiliary Territorial Service from the first. When H.R.H. visited the Women's Camp at Strensall, Yorkshire, last July, she was in the khaki uniform of the A.T.S. The Princess is Controller, West Riding, Yorkshire, and is constantly inspecting companies of the A.T.S. The Princess, like many other women, took up knitting for the soldiers. She is head of the Comforts Fund for her own Regiments, the Royal Scots (the Royal Regiment) and the Royal Corps of Signals. She worked also at the Hospital Supply depot in Harewood village. With her own village people and members of her household, she made bandages and splints. Her home was placed at the disposal of the British Red Cross for an auxiliary hospital.

The first war work of the Duchess of Gloucester was to help her own tenant farmers to get in the harvest. She responded at once to the appeal for everybody's help by doing the stooking with her lady-in-waiting, and by lending her grooms and gardeners and anybody who could be spared to do the harvesting.

As deputy for the Queen, the Duchess visited first-aid posts in every town in her home county. Women who were trying not to be bored waiting for casualties (which happily did not come) were much encouraged by the interest and kindness of this Royal lady, who came in the uniform of St. John Ambulance, and made them feel that she was one of themselves. With the same care the Duchess visited Women's Voluntary Aid Centres and the A.R.P. posts. She worked with a Working Party in her village, and visited others.

When she came for a brief visit to Buckingham Palace it was not for a holiday, but to do her work as President of the Central Hospital Supplies of the Red Cross and St. John War Organization, and in other ways.



V.A.D. PREPARED FOR ACTION

When war came the V.A.D. at once responded to the call, ready to carry on the great work it did in the previous war. Above, V.A.D. helpers are seen at work during A.R.P. exercises at Erith, in Kent, in an underground emergency hospital built by the Borough Council.

Photo, John Topham

The Duchess of Kent went at once to the hospital at Iver, where she was living when war broke out, and gave her aid in making bandages and swabs. Later she went to Scotland, constantly toured the country, visiting and encouraging the women voluntary workers in their various activities. Like other of the Royal ladies, the Duchess knitted socks and hospital stockings, and she crocheted blankets. She attended first-aid classes with naval officers' wives and the people living on the estate.

While the Queen upheld the women's work in the South, Queen Mary and the other Royal ladies each took a different centre, and their interest and hard work were a great inspiration to women in town and country, in mansion and cottage.

WOMEN'S SERVICES IN THE WAR

A.R.P., Fire and Ambulance Services

Air Raid Precautions

There are something like 1,500,000 or 1,750,000 A.R.P. workers, of whom a large proportion are women. They serve as wardens, fire-fighters, and ambulance drivers.

Auxiliary Ambulance Drivers

The women drivers are trained to drive in the dark, and in gas-masks. They know the way to all the hospitals in their district, and they have had a course of first-aid training. In London alone more than 4,000 vehicles were needed, in addition to a similar number of private cars used to transport sitting casualties. Many of the drivers were women.

Auxiliary Fire Service

Over 5,000 women were attached to fire stations in London alone. Mrs. Koster is Commandant for South of the Thames and Mrs. Rosemary Marshall for the North.

Women help the firemen all over the country. They are trained in watch-room work, fire-fighting, and anti-gas. They do clerical work, drive cars, or tow pumps.

The Women's Land Army

From the outbreak of war up to the end of November, 1939, 3,500 women received Land Army training at Government expense, and 2,800 volunteers were placed in agricultural employment. The demand at that date was not very great, as a comparatively small number of men had been called up off the land. Lady Denman is Honorary Director.

Women's Auxiliary Police

Borough and County Police Forces have in some cases recruited women to release men from clerical work, the telephone, and car-driving.

Women's Voluntary Services

Half a million voluntary workers recruited by the Dowager Lady Reading were placed at the service of local authorities all over the country. They were invaluable in the evacuation and in A.R.P. work.

First Aid, Nursing and Ambulance Services

First Aid

A trained nurse is in charge of each first-aid post, with auxiliary nurses to help her. These posts are set up in every town and village, as part of the A.R.P. scheme.

Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service

H.M. Queen Mary is President and Miss B. M. Martin, R.R.C., is Matron-in-Chief of the nurses of the Navy.

Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service

The Army nurses also have Queen Mary as head, and Miss C. M. Roy, R.R.C., M.M., is Matron-in-Chief.

The Royal Air Force Nursing Service

The Princess Royal is head, and Miss E. M. Blair, R.R.C., is Matron-in-Chief.

The Territorial Army Nursing Service

Miss A. M. Phillips, R.R.C., is Matron-in-Chief.

Nurses' Department of the Red Cross and St. John War Organization

The department supplements the nurses of each service. Dame Joanna Cruickshank, D.B.E., R.R.C., is Matron-in-Chief.

Emergency Medical Service of the Ministry of Health

Miss K. C. Watt, C.B.E., R.R.C., is Principal Matron. By the end of September the Central Emergency Committee of Nursing had enrolled 15,000 trained nurses and 20,000 auxiliary nurses who had completed training. The Committee accepted for training as auxiliaries 76,000 women.

River Ambulance Service

Three trained nurses and about ten auxiliaries take 24-hour shifts on Thames steamers fitted up as hospital ships. Two Sea Rangers act as messengers and signallers.

Other War Services

Auxiliary Territorial Service

Women between the ages of 18 and 43 years recruited to release men in the Army from cooking, orderly duties, clerical work, telephoning, store-keeping, and driving. The Queen is Commandant-in-Chief, and Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, G.B.E., Chief Controller.

Women's Auxiliary Air Force

Thousands of women work on R.A.F. stations all over the country as cooks, orderlies and clerks, telephone operators, transport drivers, and instrument mechanics. The Queen is Commandant-in-Chief, and Miss K. J. Trefusis Forbes is Director.

Women's Royal Naval Service

Women relieve men of shore jobs at the ports and naval establishments. They do decoding as well as driving, clerical work, store-keeping, cooking and stewards' work. The Queen is Commander-in-Chief and Mrs. Laughton Mathews is the Director.

Y.M.C.A.

The National Women's Auxiliary of the Y.M.C.A. runs canteens for the troops throughout the country, which are open day and night. Princess Helena Victoria, the President, takes an active interest in the work.

Y.W.C.A.

Canteens and recreation centres for Service women were provided and staffed.

Salvation Army

Salvation Army women officers help to run canteens for the troops at 40 camps. They assist with canteens at railway stations.

Entertainment

Gracie Fields led the way in entertaining the troops. Her concert in France on November 15, 1939, was such a tonic that entertainment parties were hastened off to the Front. Violet Loraine sang "the songs I sang to your fathers." Myra Hess organized luncheon-hour concerts in London.



L.N.A.

WOMEN PILOTS GET THEIR CHANCE

It was announced at the beginning of 1940 that women pilots of the former Civil Air Guard were to form a section of the Air Transport Auxiliary Service. One of their jobs was to ferry new aircraft of the R.A.F. from factory to aerodrome Some of these women pilots are here seen at an aerodrome near London.

Chapter 39

WAR IN THE AIR—LAST TWO MONTHS OF 1939: REVIEW OF THE YEAR'S OPERATIONS

Intensified Activity over the Sea—Coastal Command Patrols—Air Fights off Scotland—First British Aerial Encounters on the West—The Armée de l'Air—Seaplanes Lay Mines—Raid on Borkum—'Security Patrols'—Week of Allied Victories—Attack on German Warships near Heligoland—Raid on Firth of Forth—Ban on Land Bombing—Review of the First Four Months

Most interesting of the opening phases of the war in the air was the one with which it is proposed to deal in this chapter, a phase covering the period from October 21 to the latter part of December, 1939. During this period Germany intensified her aerial activity while still maintaining a rigid ban on the bombing of open towns, and of land objectives where there might have been heavy casualties among civilians.

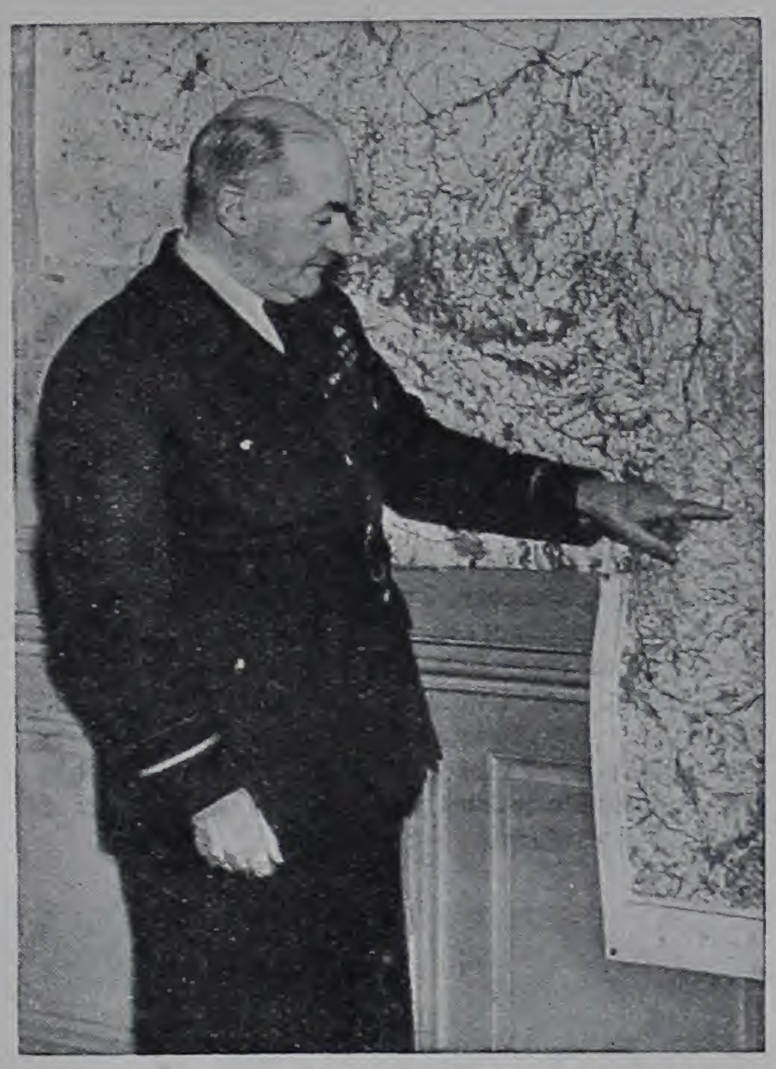
Two outstanding features of the German operations were the use of aircraft for mine-dropping and the use of aircraft to attack small merchant ships and fishing vessels in the North Sea. The mine-dropping came as a partial surprise and caused a good deal of comment; but the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy rapidly devised methods for dealing with it. October 21 was notable for an attack by twelve German seaplanes on a British convoy. The attack was unsuccessful and the enemy machines were heavily engaged both by fighters and by anti-aircraft guns. On the following day, October 22, there was further activity off Scotland. Two enemy aircraft were also seen off the south-east coast. These machines were engaged by British fighters and one of them was brought down, the crew being seen to leave the wreckage of their machine in a collapsible boat.

On October 23 the Air Ministry announced that two successful attacks had been made by Royal Air Force aeroplanes on U-boats.

Coastal Command

During the whole of the period under review the Coastal Command of the Royal Air Force was engaged on continuous watch over the North Sea and parts of the Atlantic Ocean. This work, which supplements that of the Fleet Air Arm, is directed from operations rooms in much the same way as the work of the Fighter Command. Machines go out on patrols which are so correlated that enormous areas of sea are kept under almost continuous supervision and enemy activity is severely restricted. In all weathers these machines keep out on patrol, and from the outbreak of war until the early part of December they had flown some 3,000,000 miles. Once, when a British submarine had been damaged, it was escorted safely home by aircraft of the Coastal Command. More than once shipwrecked seamen whose ships had been sunk or disabled were saved by these machines.

On October 24 four more German airmen were shot down by British aeroplanes. Two of them were rescued by a British warship after they had been adrift in their collapsible boat for three days. It was on this day that reports were circulated from Basle stating that a cluster of small balloons had been found in Riehen, and that attached to the balloons were packets of leaflets containing extracts from Herr Hitler's speeches translated into French. It was assumed that it was the intention that these balloon clusters should drift over to French territory.



AN AIR FORCE COMMANDER

The R.A.F. in France, placed in January, 1940, under the control of Air Marshal A. S. Barratt, embraced two main divisions: Army Co-operation Squadrons, commanded by Air Vice-Marshal C. H. Blount, and bombing, reconnaissance and other units under Air Vice-Marshal P. H. L. Playfair, seen above at R.A.F. Headquarters in France.

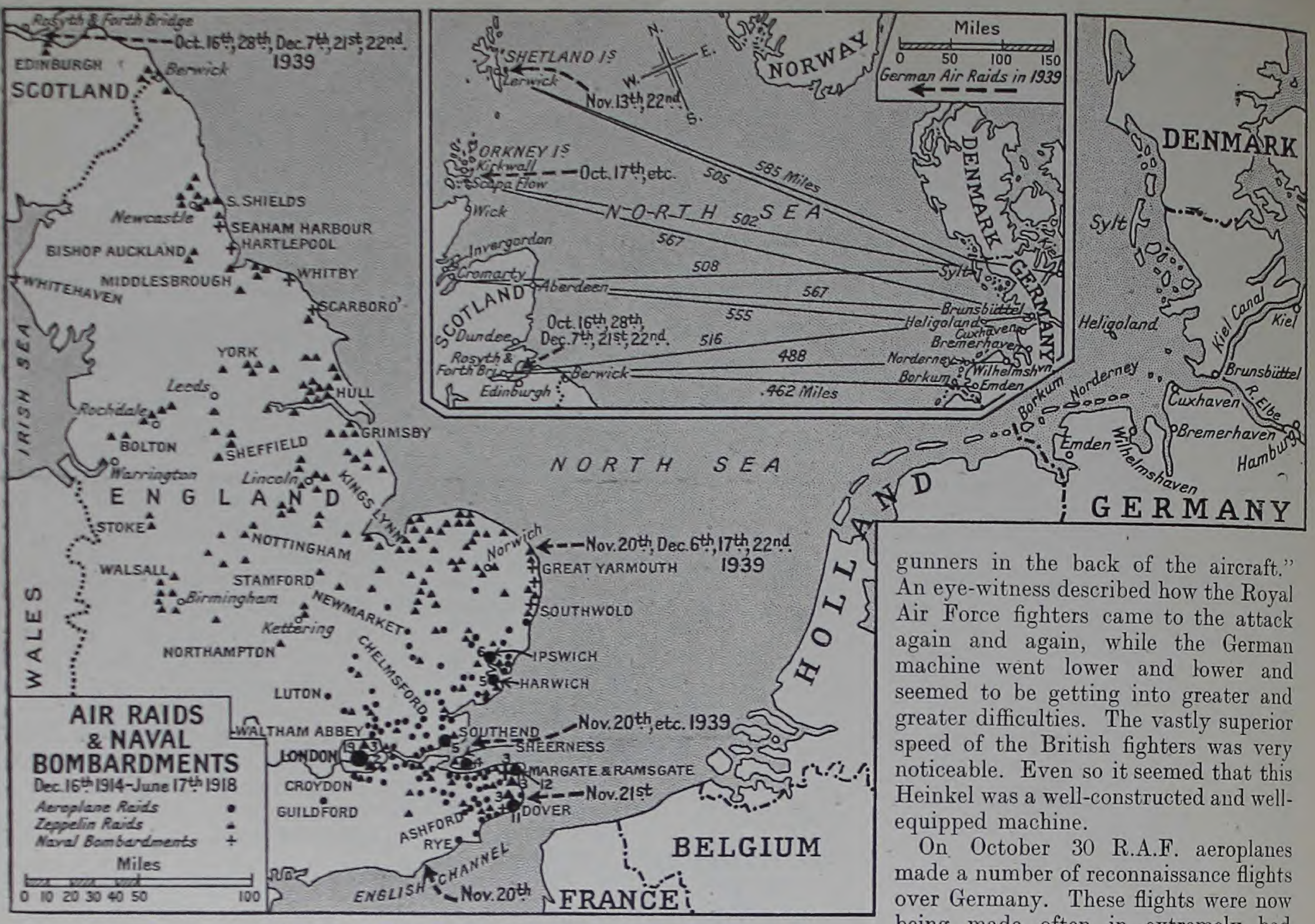
British Official Photograph: Crown Copyright

Routine reconnaissance flights were being made by the Royal Air Force throughout the month, and on October 25 the places visited were Magdeburg, Hamburg and Berlin. All the British machines returned safely. An Oslo report which reached London on this day stated that one of the bombs dropped by Royal Air Force pilots during the raid on the Kiel district in the early days of the war fell down the funnel of the German battleship "Gneisenau," breaking the ship in two. This report must be discounted as obviously imaginative. There is every reason to believe that an important German warship was hit and severely damaged during the raid, but the funnel of a modern warship is not just a hole into the centre of the vessel. Even supposing that a bomb did fall into a funnel, there is little likelihood that it would cause a ship of this size to break in two.

Battleships Hit?

On Friday, October 27, in the United States of America, an important event occurred from the point of view of the strength of the Allies in the air: this was the voting of the United States Senate in favour of the repeal of the embargo on the sale of arms to belligerent nations. The voting was 67 to 22 and it cleared the way for the passage of the Neutrality Bill, which opened up America's armament factories to belligerents on the "cash-and-carry" basis. America's aircraft industry, though smaller than the British, was known to be a highly developed one and capable of rapid expansion. Both France and Britain were using American machines for training and also for first line service. The French had some of their squadrons equipped with Curtiss single-seat fighters, and Britain was using the Lockheed twin-engined machines both for training and for Coastal Command patrol.

On October 28 a German reconnaissance machine was brought down in Scotland by Royal Air Force Spitfire fighters manned by members of the Auxiliary Air Force. The German crew



AIR RAIDS OF TWO WARS

In the main map above are shown air raids and coastal bombardments on Britain from 1914 to 1918, indicated by symbols (explained in key). This map also shows by dates the raids of 1939. The first aeroplane raids of 1914–18 took place over Kent on December 24 and 25, 1914, and the last one on June 17, 1918. Total casualties in 52 raids were 857 killed and 2,058 injured. The first airship raid took place on January 19–20, 1915, and the last on April 12–13, 1918. There were 51 airship raids, in which 557 were killed and 1,358 injured In bombardments from the sea about 125 were killed and some 600 injured. Inset map shows the probable bases from which bombing raids on Scotland were carried out by the Germans in 1939, and the distances covered by the raiders.

put up a fierce resistance and fought valiantly, losing height all the time, until they were skimming the tree-tops with the British fighters still in pursuit.

The German machine was a Heinkel He 111K of recent pattern, with Junkers Juno 211A engines and the new short nose and smooth upper part to the fuselage. It carried a forward firing gun and two rearward firing guns. The R.A.F. fighters dived on it again and again, riddling it with bullets and eventually killing one of the two rear gunners and wounding the other. This second gunner was the one in the tunnel position underneath the fuselage, and when the pilot was finally forced to land the gunner's neck was broken by the impact, for the landing was a rough one made on unsuitable ground. The enemy pilot was wounded, but when approached by police he was able to say in good English: "We surrender as prisoners of war. Please see to my gunners in the back of the aircraft." An eye-witness described how the Royal Air Force fighters came to the attack again and again, while the German machine went lower and lower and seemed to be getting into greater and greater difficulties. The vastly superior speed of the British fighters was very noticeable. Even so it seemed that this Heinkel was a well-constructed and well-equipped machine.

On October 30 R.A.F. aeroplanes made a number of reconnaissance flights over Germany. These flights were now being made often in extremely bad weather. On one of them, on the previous Friday, the cold had been so intense that the crew were sick and then so numbed that they were almost senseless. Ice formed on the wings, and the temperature went to 30 degrees below zero. On the engine cowlings ice six inches thick was noticed.



Associated Press

RAIDER THAT DID NOT RETURN

On October 28, 1939, a German reconnaissance 'plane was brought down in Scotland by R.A.F. machines after a running fight in the air. Above, the bullet-riddled enemy machine, a Heinkel He 111K, after its forced landing.

On October 31 the Air Ministry announced that British fighters had had their first opportunity to engage German bombers over French territory. Two machines came over flying very high: one of them, a Dornier, was shot down, but the other escaped. The machine shot down crashed about twenty miles from where the combat had started and went into the ground with both engines still running. The nose was buried nine feet in the earth and the petrol tanks exploded, so that fragments were scattered over a wide area.

Lord Nuffield was appointed Director-General of Maintenance at the Air Ministry on November 1. He was made responsible to the Air Council through the Air Member for Supply and Organization. His assistant was Mr. Oliver Boden. Maintenance was recognized as a side of supply which would come into increasing prominence as the intensity of air war increased, and the appointment of Lord Nuffield was generally approved.

On November 2 the King concluded a two days' visit to Royal Air Force stations in the North of England and the Midlands. During his tour he decorated five men and spoke to the pilots who had bombed Cuxhaven, as well as the first men to fly over Berlin and Potsdam. He also talked with a South African pilot who had sunk a U-boat.

On November 6 occurred the biggest aerial battle up to that date, and it resulted in a brilliant success for the Allies. It was fought between twenty-seven German Messerschmitt single-seater fighters and nine French Curtiss single-seater fighters manned by pilots of the "Armée de l'Air." Some reports stated that the Messerschmitts were in the act of chasing a single British machine which they had caught over Germany, and that the French fighters came down upon them and succeeded in surprising them. The fight raged from between ground level and 16,000 feet, and was fought by the French pilots with incomparable dash and brilliance.

A remarkable account of this combat was subsequently given in the French technical press by one of the French pilots who had himself brought down two German machines. He emphasized that the loads were terrific, with the speeds in the dive often going up to more than 400 miles an hour. He mentioned the tremendous physical effort needed to keep a watch on the enemy when turning sharply at high speed, and when subject to big centrifugal loads which seemed to drive the pilot down through his seat and make his head feel as if it would burst. The first success obtained by this pilot resulted in the German pilot leaping from his disabled machine with his parachute and landing somewhere near the Maginot Line. The second victory resulted in the Messerschmitt going down in flames and falling into a pine wood. The Messerschmitts concerned were the 109 single-engined type. The fight mostly circled round the hilly region of Saarlouis, and the German machines were pursued as far as the German town of Merzig.



ROYAL INVESTITURE

Above, King George is seen bestowing the D.F.M. upon Sergeant W. E. Willits, who took over the controls of an aircraft during combat with the enemy when the pilot was shot through the head. Among others decorated at this investiture were the R.A.F. officers seen in pages 71 and 93.

Photo, Keystone

On November 8 a fine single-handed action was fought by a British fighter pilot in France against a German Dornier 17 aeroplane engaged on reconnaissance. The R.A.F. pilot was in the air when he noticed anti-aircraft shell bursts.

Thrilling Dog-fight

He flew towards them and then observed a Dornier 17 flying extremely high. He climbed and the Dornier climbed too. Eventually the British fighter, a Hawker Hurricane with fixed-pitch wooden airscrew, managed to close with the German machine at the great height of 27,000 feet. As the Hurricane approached, fire was opened by the German rear gunner. At the first burst from the British machine her pilot (a New Zealander) gained the impression that he had hit the port engine. The German began to lose height and the British pilot broke off the combat, turning steeply and watching the enemy machine. Almost at once it sought to escape into a cloud layer, so the British pilot closed again and, in his own words, "gave the enemy all he had" in the way of gunfire, opening his eight guns at about 200 yards and firing



THE RABBIT 'TWAS THAT DIED

The Shetland Isles received frequent visits from enemy aircraft, and the crater seen above was caused by a bomb dropped from one of these raiders on November 13, 1939, when the first bombs actually fell on British soil. The only casualty, a rabbit, is being proudly exhibited by the man standing in the crater.

Photo, Associated Press

continuously while closing to an estimated distance of 50 yards and only just avoiding collision with the enemy machine. The latter now went into a very steep dive with engines on. The British pilot thought that this might be an attempt to escape, and followed. The German dived more steeply until it was plunging vertically earthwards, with the Hurricane plunging after it. The speed reached must have been extremely high, for afterwards the Hurricane was found to have stripped some of the fabric off the top surfaces of its wings, a sign of exceptionally great aerodynamical forces.





WHEN NINE BEAT TWENTY-SEVEN

This remarkable series of photographs from the "Pathé Gazette" show stages in an air fight in the West, when nine French fighters attacked a group of 27 German machines. Above, the nine French 'planes are flying in formation to give battle; on the left, two of the French aircraft (Curtiss fighters) are attacking six of the Messerschmitts, which have broken formation. Below, one of the nine German 'planes which were brought down. All the French aircraft returned safely.

Courtesy of "Pathé Gazette"

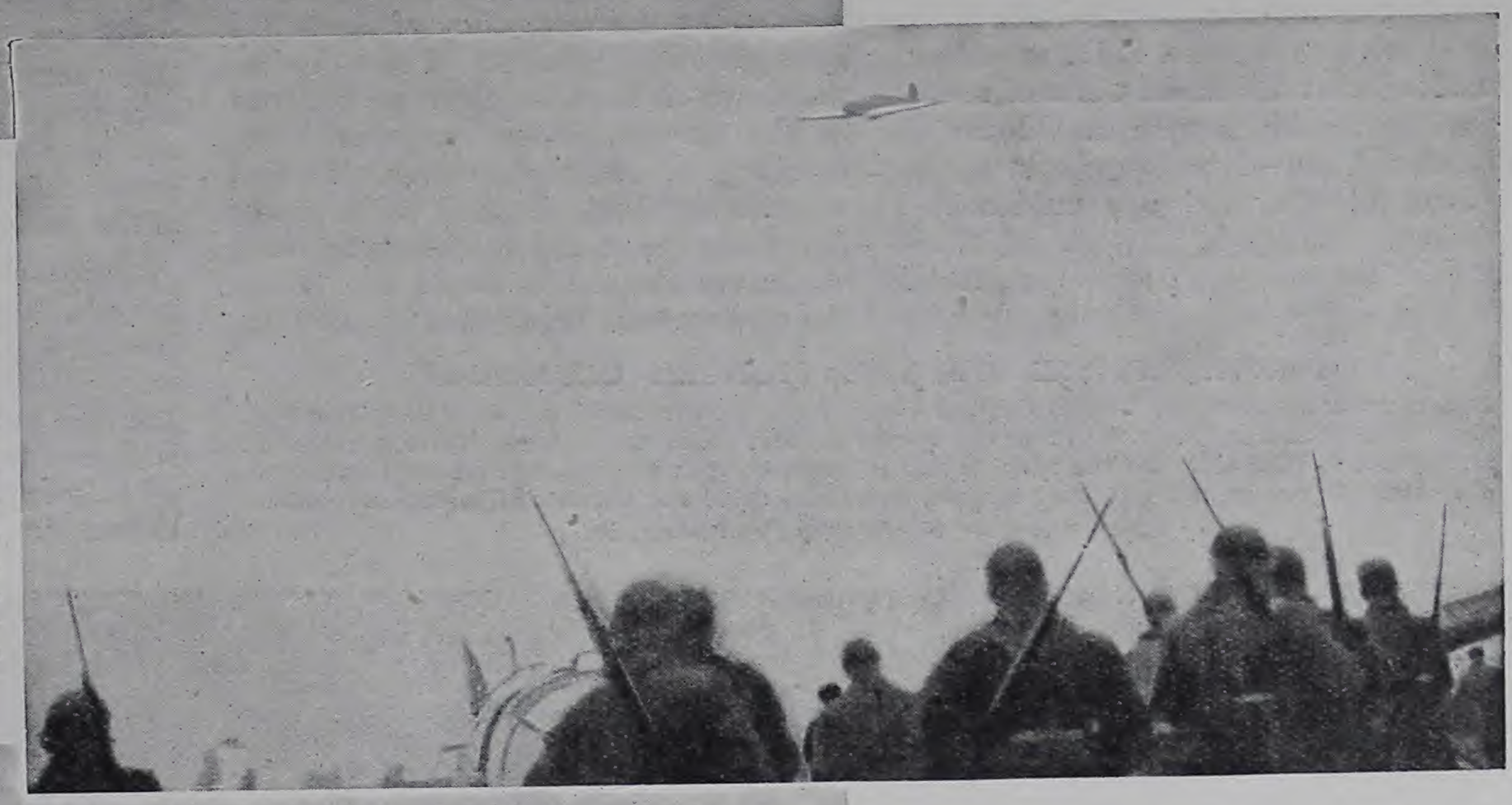


The German machine never pulled out of its dive, but continued until it went into the middle of the main road running through a small French village. The wreckage testified to the force of the impact. Although the road was a metalled one of good quality, the engines had gone so deeply into it that no part of them could be distinguished. The largest piece of the machine that was left was no bigger than a dining-room chair, and that was from the extreme tail. The bodies of the crew were torn to small pieces, some of which were thrown a long distance and found in the trees of an orchard.

On November 10 there was another R.A.F. victory when two machines of the Coastal Command forced a German flying boat down on to the water off the East Coast. The German crew took to their collapsible boat. On the day following this event there were more British reconnaissance flights over Germany, including the towns of Stuttgart, Mannheim, and Nuremberg; on the other hand, there was an air-raid warning sounded in Paris. On November 13 two air raids were made by the Germans on the Shetland Islands. In all twenty bombs were dropped and four aeroplanes took part. No ships were hit and no damage was done except to a rabbit and to the windows of an uninhabited house. The bombs were thought mostly to have been about 50 kilogrammes (110 lb.) in weight. On the day following this raid German machines were again reported over the same district. The German claim for the Shetlands raid was that two seaplanes had been destroyed and that a cruiser had been hit. These statements were subsequently denied in Britain.

On November 17 air-raid warnings were sounded in a large number of districts in the Midlands—in South Lancashire, Cheshire, and North Wales. The Observer Corps had detected a reconnaissance aeroplane, thought to be a Heinkel, and alarm sirens were sounded in thirteen towns. It was subsequently suggested that no enemy machine had been in these districts, but

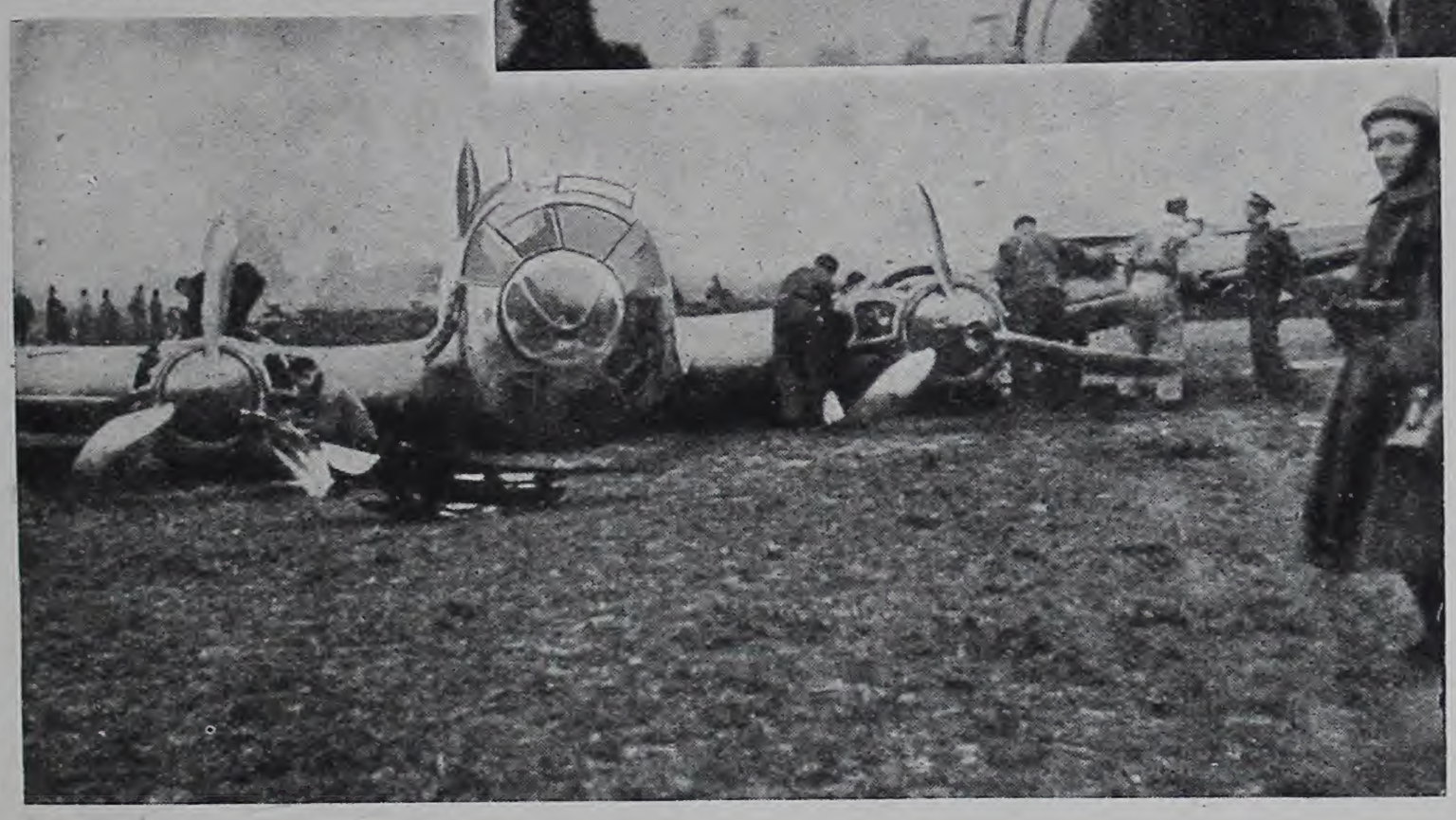




BRITISH PILOT DOWNS A NAZI BOMBER

The last week of November, 1939, was a period of many victories of the Allied air forces In this page a British victory, watched by French troops, is illustrated, when a British pursuit 'plane brought down a big German bomber. Above, the British aircraft photographed during the battle. Right, the British pilot circling above his victim, which has crashed. Below, the stricken bomber, its airscrews twisted and its fuselage riddled with bullets, lying in a field near Hazebrouck.

Photos, "Match," Paris



some weeks afterwards German illustrated newspapers contained photographs alleged to have been taken by a German reconnaissance machine, and the photographs included pictures of places in the districts where alarms had been sounded. There were more air-raid warnings on November 19, sounded in the Firth of Forth district and on the Essex coast. Reports from Copenhagen stated that there had been a battle between British cruisers and at least ten big German bombing aeroplanes. It was said that a hundred bombs had been dropped. The cruisers had replied with accurate fire and at least one enemy machine was hit. Later it was learnt that actually two had been crippled.

On November 20 enemy raiding aeroplanes came over towards the Essex coast and over the Sussex coast at a great height. Warnings were sounded in East Kent. This was the first time that enemy aeroplanes had come over British territory during the hours of black-out. German machines were also reported over the Orkneys. On the following day there were further reconnaissance flights, and then Heinkel 115 seaplanes were seen over the Thames Estuary. This latter raid, although the point was not immediately appreciated, was the opening stage of a new kind of air warfare : the dropping of mines from the air. The enemy machines laid mines at five different points off the East Coast.

Minelaying seaplanes were known to have been developed by Germany during peacetime, but it was not thought that they had reached a very advanced stage. The form of minelaying adopted in the war was such that seaplanes were not essential, and either seaplanes or landplanes could equally well be used. One machine could carry two mines, and these could be dropped without the aircraft having to take such great risks of being intercepted and shot down as if it were on a bombing raid. It was thought that small parachutes were attached to the German mines so as to mitigate the force of the impact with the water. There seemed no technical reason why parachutes should be needed, for a cocking device could be arranged to prevent any risk of the mine exploding on impact with the water. It was also thought—and this received partial confirmation later—that some of the mines dropped from the air were of the magnetic variety.

On the day following the discovery that the Germans were using aircraft as minelayers (November 22) enemy machines again flew over the Shetland Islands. They came very low and dropped many bombs in the water and

also used their machine-guns against British seaplanes lying at moorings. One seaplane was set on fire and sunk, but the crew managed to swim ashore. Six German machines took part in this raid. Two days later seven reconnaissance machines came over the Shetlands.

In France, at about the time that minelaying activities were being begun round the coasts of Britain, German machines attempted many reconnaissance flights. French fighters shot down a Dornier 17, and another Dornier which may have been the later 215 type. The French also accounted for three Messerschmitt 109 fighters, and British pilots shot down two Heinkel 111K machines. On November 23 seven German reconnaissance machines were shot down by British fighters—four Dornier 17's, two Heinkel 111K's, and one unidentified machine. This was a week of many victories for the Allied air forces, for in one forty-eight-hour period they shot down nineteen enemy aeroplanes. German claims were that four French Morane 406 fighters had been shot down by Messerschmitt 109's and that one Morane had been destroyed by a twin-engined Messerschmitt 110 fighter.

On November 25 two attacks were made by German aeroplanes on British ships in the North Sea. Many bombs were dropped, but no hits were obtained. The Germans claimed four direct hits.

The last few days of November and the first few of December saw the Royal Air Force taking the offensive against the enemy, but still under limitations imposed by the war policy of the Allied Supreme War Council. These limitations, which became clear as the war in the air progressed, prohibited the bombing of land objectives. It had presumably been decided that unless the Germans took to bombing land objectives the Allies would not do so, the consequence being that all bombing attacks by both sides were directed against shipping. On November 28, however, the R.A.F. did attack a land base, but not with bombs. It raided the German seaplane base at Borkum, whence it was thought some of the mine-laying aeroplanes had come. The operation was brilliantly carried out, and the R.A.F. suffered no casualties.

Raid on Borkum

A patrol of long-range fighters which had been sent out to search for mine-laying seaplanes reconnoitred the base at Borkum and there found and attacked with machine-gun fire three enemy seaplanes. Our aeroplanes were met by heavy anti-aircraft fire from the ground, and they attacked with their machine-guns and succeeded in silencing some of the anti-aircraft gun positions.

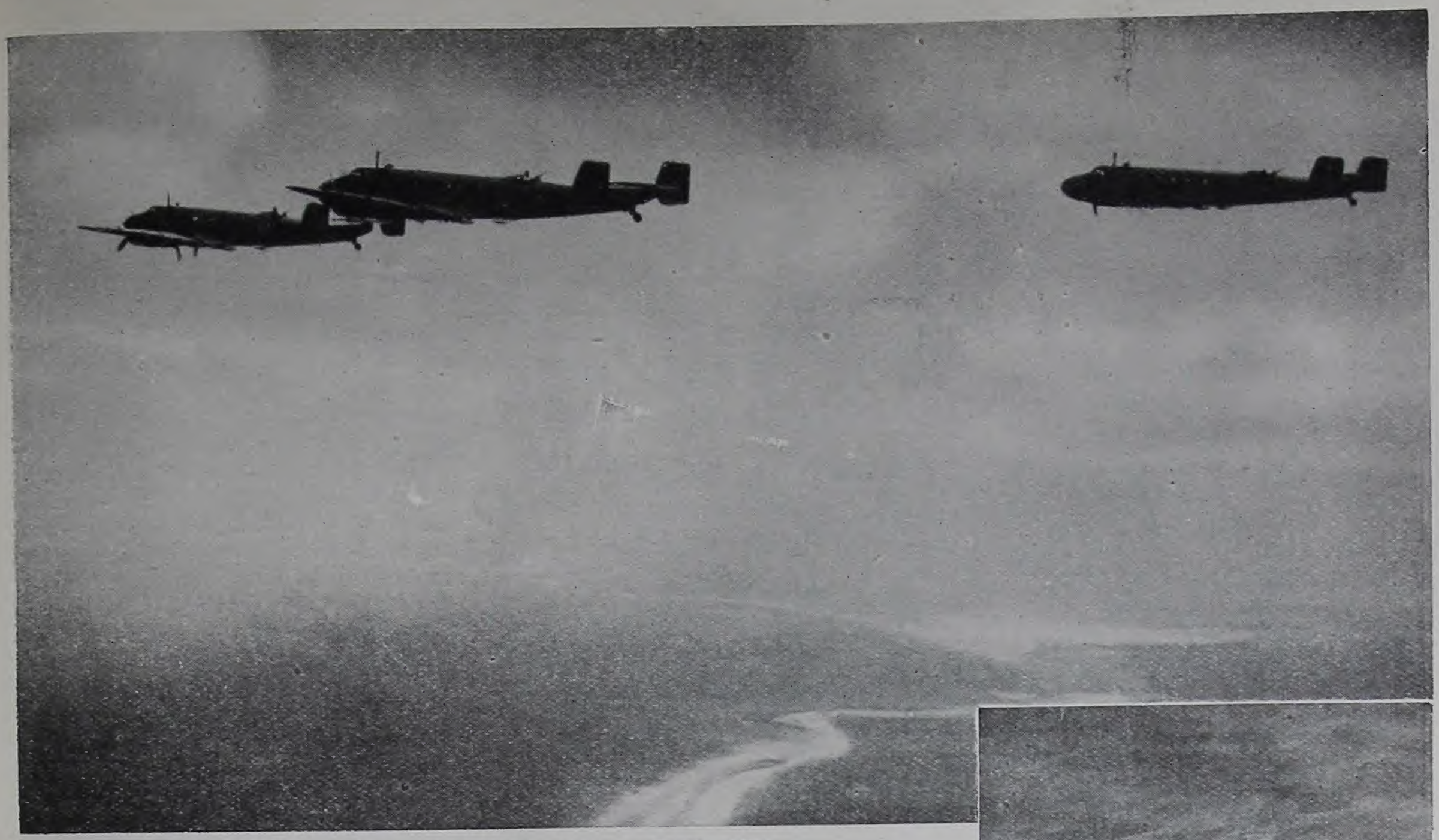
Borkum is one of the Friesian Islands near the mouth of the River Ems. After this event it became the scene of a good deal of aerial activity. Another point about this R.A.F. attack is that it was the first time that the use of long-range fighters had been mentioned in any official communiqué.

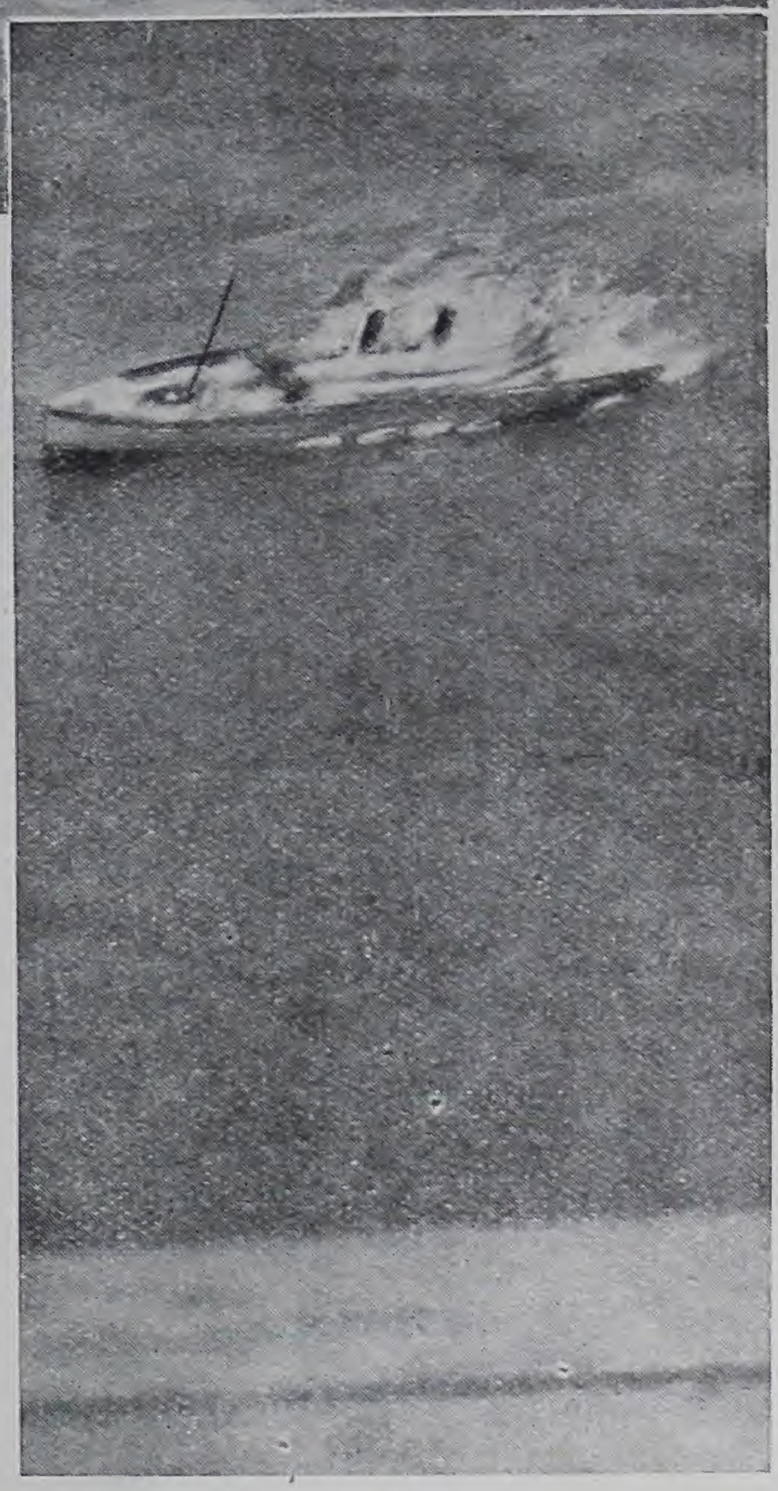
NERVE CENTRE OF THE FIGHTER COMMAND

This reconstruction of the Central Control Room of the Fighter Command was taken from the film "The Lion Has Wings." From the Operations Section, in the gallery, orders are issued for fighters to take off. On the table Britain is mapped out in sections, and around it are telephonists. As reports come in, the positions, directions, speed and number of raiders are noted.

Photo, Alexander Korda Film Productions, Ltd.







'SPRINGBOK' SENTINELS OVER THE SEA

Air liners, converted for military use, fought the menace of the armed commerce raider along the South African coast. Above, bomber reconnaissance machines setting off along the seaboard. Below, right, the German liner " Watussi," set on fire by her captain when intercepted by aircraft of the South African Sea Defence Force. Crew and passengers were rescued by a British warship.

Photos, Fox; Wide World

The machines in question are twin-engined aeroplanes derived from the Bristol Blenheim bombers but carrying heavier gun armament in place of bombs. They were in use in the squadrons before the outbreak of war. Twelve took part in the raid on Borkum ; they flew very low and very fast, skimming the ground and taking the defences entirely by surprise.

On November 29, early in the morning, there were two attempts by German aeroplanes to penetrate the British coastal defences. One was made by a Heinkel, which was shot down in single combat by a British pilot five miles off the Northumbrian coast. It was approaching the coast when it was intercepted. It first appeared flying from behind a bank of cloud. Turning to intercept the raider, the fighter pilot, in his own words, " ducked back into the clouds " for about thirty seconds. When he came out of the clouds the enemy was immediately above him. As he climbed, the raider waited until the fighter was only 400 yards away, and then dived for the cloud 1,500 feet below with one of his rear guns firing. The fighter followed, and after he had closed to 150 yards, the German machine turned on its side and dived vertically into the clouds, emitting a column of smoke. Boats searched the area, but could find no trace of the German machine or its crew.

After this, on December 3, there came one of the most successful actions fought by the Royal Air Force up to that time. It was a heavy attack on German warships near Heligoland, made by a formation of Vickers Wellington bombers. They flew over high and approached their targets just after 11.30 in the morning, sighting them through a cloud layer. The Germans appear to have been taken by surprise, but they sent up a heavy anti-aircraft barrage, and fighters immediately took off from neighbouring bases to try to intercept the British machines. The Wellington pilots performed their bombing with great accuracy, direct hits being obtained ; one pilot stated that his bombs " straddled " one warship. Some twenty Messerschmitt fighters took off to try to bring down the British machines, but only one of them made contact, and that was shot down by one of the British gunners. This gunner was hit by a bullet, but the bullet happened to strike the quick-release plate of his parachute harness, and this prevented him from being injured. All the British machines returned safely, although one was hit in the tail. The German account, which was issued some time before the British one, stated that the only loss had been one small fishing boat, and that the German machine which had fallen into the sea had done so because the pilot had been injured in the eye by a splinter.

December 3 was also noteworthy for the fact that an aeroplane of the Coastal Command succeeded in sinking a U-boat. He sighted the submarine about eight miles away and, using the clouds for cover, managed to get within range. He then scored a direct hit with a bomb on the conning tower. Parts of the submarine and wreckage were thrown high into the air, and the water was coated with oil for a large area.

On December 6 there were two encounters between Dornier flying-boats and R.A.F. Coastal Command patrols. One occurred north of Heligoland and the result was indeterminate. In the other the British machine made six attacks, but, although oil was observed pouring from the German machine, it was not seen to crash. On that day one of the British patrolling aircraft failed to return, and as a German communiqué had stated that a collision had occurred between a British and a German machine during an engagement near the Dutch island of Texel, it was thought that this might have referred to the missing British machine.

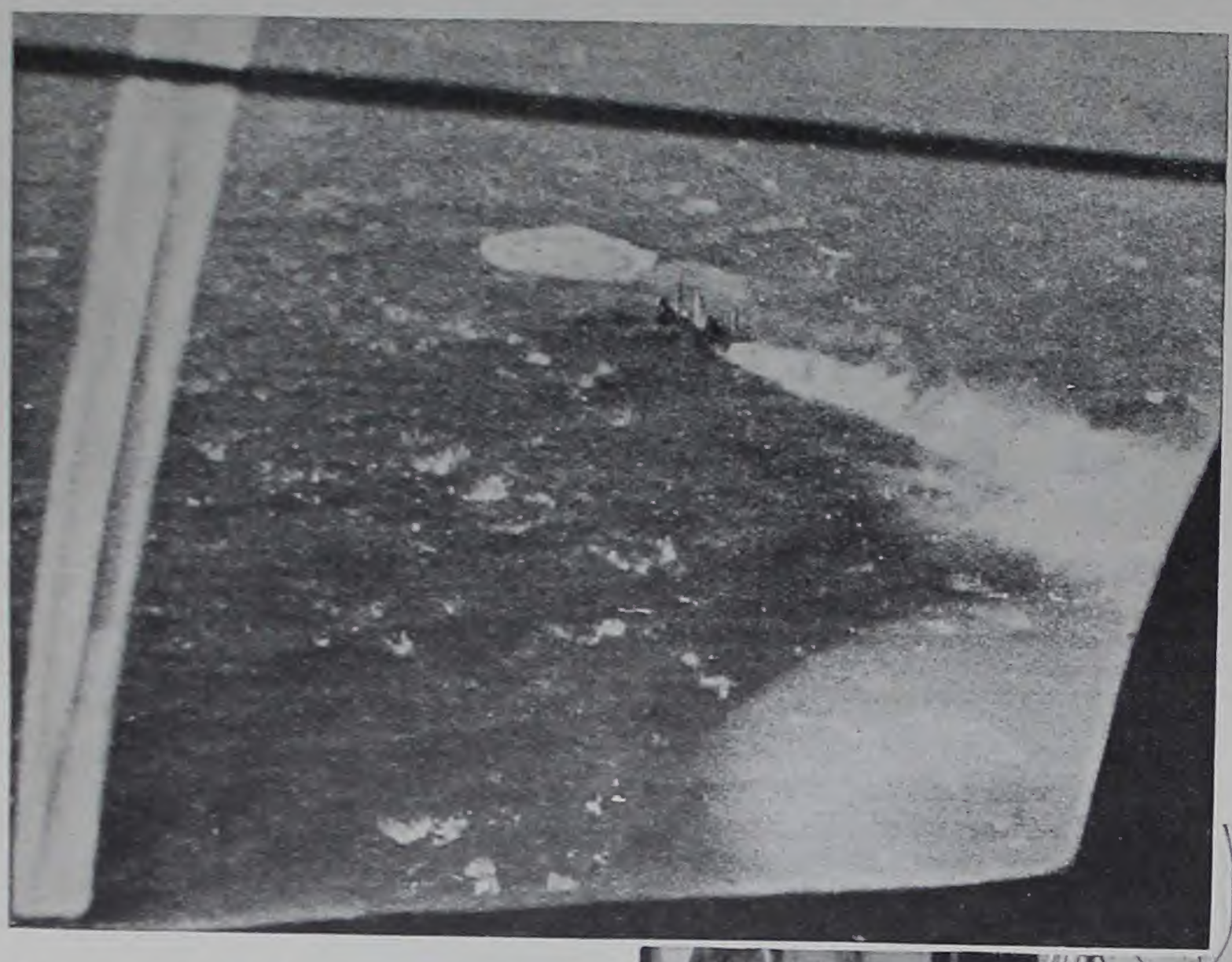
On December 7 eight enemy aeroplanes approached the Firth of Forth. Fighters went up to intercept them and made contact. One enemy aircraft was seen to be hit and another one was believed to have been damaged. In an engagement off another part of the coast on the same day another German machine was intercepted, and that too was believed to have been hit. It was during this week that the South African Air Force came into action for the first time. Three of its reconnaissance aeroplanes intercepted the German liner "Watussi," which had slipped out of Mozambique harbour. It was ordered to sail to Simonstown. When first challenged the liner ignored the signals, so bombs were dropped in the sea ahead of her as a warning. The "Watussi" then changed course, but later on she was scuttled.

Two more attacks were made on German submarines on December 8, by machines of the Coastal Command. One attack was certainly successful, and the pilot saw his first bomb hit the boat amidships a yard to starboard of the conning tower. The U-boat began to sink, and a second bomb fell directly above her. The pilot circled overhead for about twenty minutes until the submarine sank. The second submarine was attacked while in the act of submerging. Afterwards large patches of oil were seen on the water.

On December 12 Sir Kingsley Wood, making a statement in the House of Commons about the progress of the air war, said that the British Hurricane and Spitfire fighters had been shown to possess a decisive margin over the German Dorniers, Junkers and Heinkels. It was on this day that further proof of the effectiveness of the balloon barrage was provided in a tragic manner. An aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm crashed into a cable and the crew were killed.

Superior 'Planes

On December 13 two Dornier flying-boats were attacked over the North Sea by an aeroplane belonging to the Coastal Command. There was evidence that both the rear gunners had been hit. The first announcement was made by the Air Ministry about the R.A.F. "Security Patrols" in the region of the German seaplane bases at Sylt, Borkum and Norderney. These Security Patrols were designed to control German mine-laying seaplanes, and were an entirely new and unorthodox use of large bombing aeroplanes. The British machines patrolled the area, and, when the lights





MURDER FROM THE SKIES

Towards the end of 1939 the Nazis began a murderous campaign against defenceless trawlers, which were bombed from the air and machine-gunned. The top photograph, from Scandinavian sources, shows a trawler being bombed. At bottom, the trawler "Etruria," with fore-deck smashed by Nazi bombs.

Photos, International Graphic Press ; Topical Press

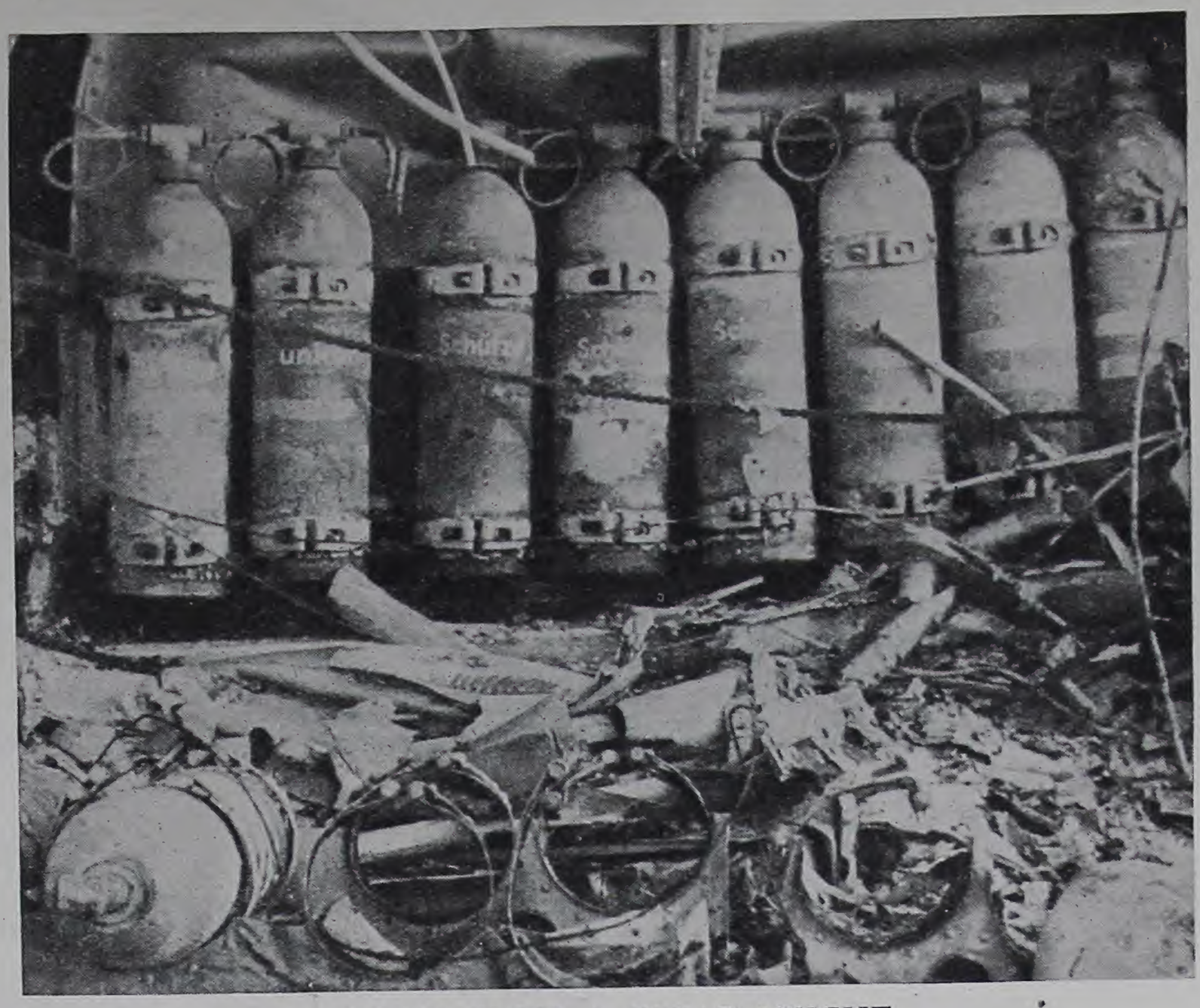
of flare paths were seen on the water, dropped bombs on them and so prevented the German seaplanes from taking off. The order not to drop any bomb on land targets remained in force, however, so that the British machines were not allowed to attack the seaplanes while these were on the slipways.

During the following seven days, until December 20, there were several aerial engagements, culminating with one over Heligoland on December 18, which was believed to have been up to then the biggest aerial battle of the war. (It was not so big in the matter of the number of machines engaged as some of the aerial battles which had taken place towards the latter part of the war of 1914–18. There had been the earlier fight near Heligoland on December 3, which is described in page 431.) During this period, too, the Germans started a series of unrestricted attacks from the air upon British fishing vessels. Fishing craft and unarmed merchant ships were bombed and machine-gunned; a number were sunk.

Details of the big aerial battle over Heligoland mentioned above were made public some time after the fight; they revealed that six of the new twin-engined Messerschmitt 110 fighters were shot down by the British bombers, one R.A.F. machine accounting for five of them, and that seven of our machines failed to return. The fantastic claim was made by the Germans that thirty-four British machines had been shot down. Actually the total number that went out was far smaller than this.

A general review of the war in the air during 1939 must take note of two essentials: the first is that both sides deliberately refrained from bombing land targets, and the second is that both sides exerted their main effort at sea. It is not to be supposed that anything more than a very small part of the total forces available to Great Britain and to Germany were engaged in the series of sea operations that took place; but these were nevertheless the chief operations. The Nazis adopted the novel method of sowing mines from aircraft; the Royal Air Force countered it by the institution of "Security Patrols" which remained near the German seaplane bases all night and made the problem of taking off difficult. The Nazis attacked British ships, sometimes warships, but also unarmed merchant and fishing vessels, with bombs and machine-gun fire. The Royal Air Force confined its counter-attacks to warships, and it attacked them only when they were out in the open sea, where no inaccurately aimed bomb could possibly fall on land.

Four Months of Aerial Warfare



DOWN FROM A GREAT HEIGHT

The photograph above shows oxygen cylinders in the wreck of a German Dornier aircraft brought down by the R.A.F. in France. The cylinders in question were for the use of the radio operator (Funker) and gunner (Schütze). Oxygen apparatus is essential for crews of modern fighting aircraft, often travelling at great heights in rarefied air.

Photo, Keystone

In France the main preoccupation of the Air Forces of both sides was reconnaissance. High-flying reconnaissance machines were sent out by the Royal Air Force and the French Armée de l'Air, and by the Germans. A fairly high proportion of the German machines was brought down. The British and French reconnaissance flights entailed some losses, but in relation to the German casualties these losses were so small as to be of no account. Photographs were taken by both sides of important objectives, and propaganda leaflets were dropped by both sides.

The Germans published their photographs first and they were made much of, but those with inside information affirmed that some at least were fakes, taken some time before the war; in some cases buildings of comparatively recent construction were not to be seen on the German pictures. The photographs taken by the Royal Air Force of objectives in Germany were superior; the Air Ministry allowed none of these to be published before the end of the year, but later a few were issued.

As the year drew to a close the vigilance of the Allied Air forces was intensified, for it was supposed by many that the Germans might make an aerial sortie at about Christmas time, trusting to the belief that there must be at such a time a general relaxation of watchfulness. But there was no special action by the Germans, and the British and French patrols were unmolested.

What is a fair summary of the position in the air war up to the end of 1939? It is that the Allies had played throughout a more active part, although no bombing competition had been begun. The Germans were obviously husbanding their resources, and were not sending over more reconnaissance machines than could obtain just enough information for their purposes. The enemy bombing attacks on ships and flying boats in the Firth of Forth and the Shetlands were also made with small forces, and nothing approaching a big-scale raid was attempted. Even the large British formations which visited the Heligoland area did not tempt the Germans to send similarly large formations to Britain. Altogether the preliminary stages of the air war, though they gave evidence that both sides were waiting, showed a more forward spirit on the part of the Allies. Moreover, in the technical quality of their aeroplanes the Allies proved incontestably superior to the Germans in every branch.



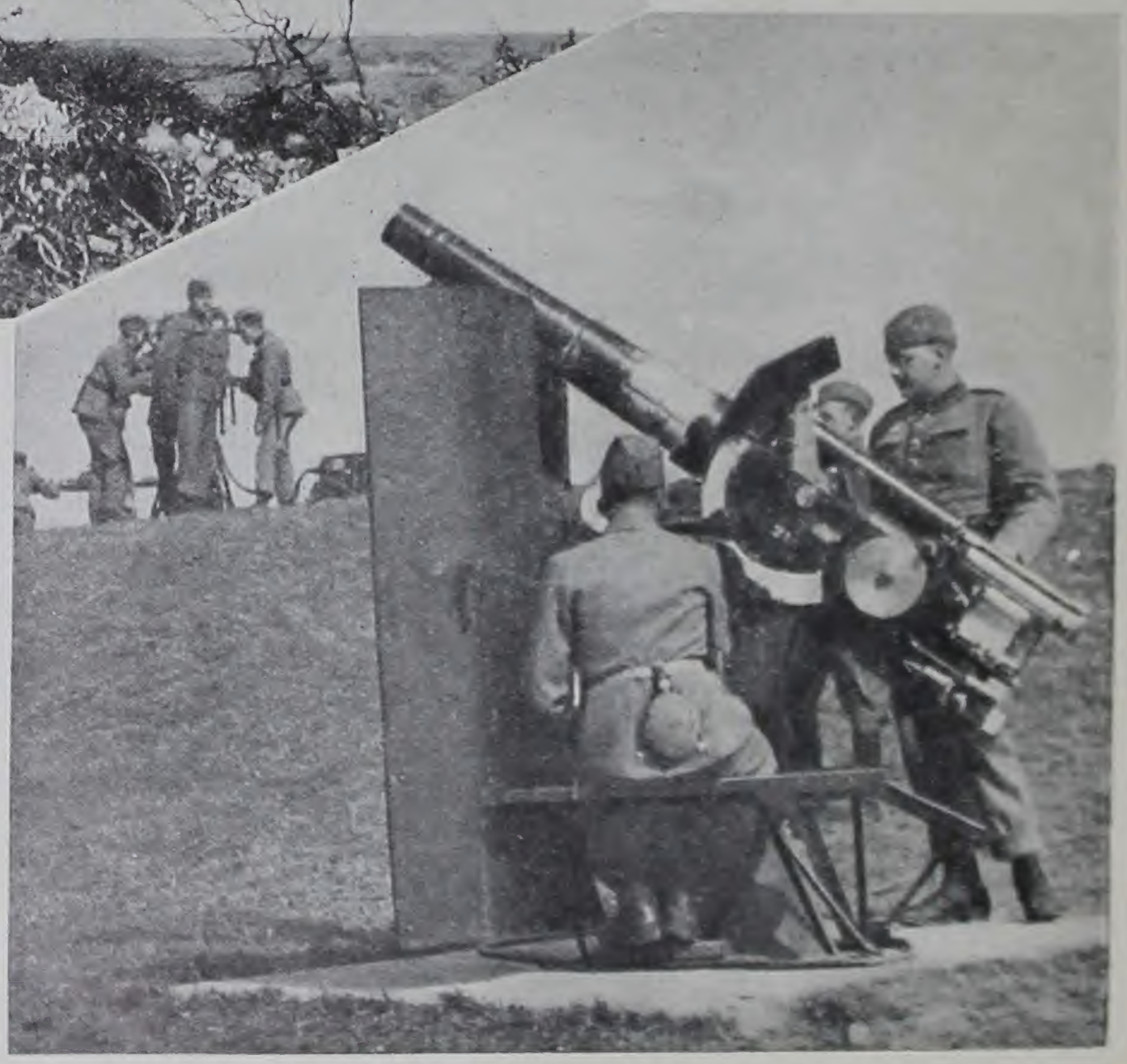


SCANDINAVIAN STATES CAN TAKE NO CHANCES

Warned by the near approach of war, the Scandinavian states strengthened their defences. Above, anti-aircraft machine-guns placed on housetops in Norway; left, a camouflaged heavy gun of the Swedish coastal defences; below, right, an anti-aircraft post on the Danish frontier ready for any emergency; below, left, Lt.-Gen. O. G. Thoernell, Commander-in-Chief of Sweden's National Defences.

Photos, International Graphic Press, L.N.A., G.P.U.





Chapter 40

THE NORTHERN NEUTRALS: PLIGHT OF FINLAND AND THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

Russia's Onslaught Against Finland Affected Vital Interests of Norway and Sweden—Denmark was Powerless—Intimidation by the Nazis—Norway and Sweden's Generous Help to Finland—A Force of Swedish Volunteers to Fight the Russians—Appeal to the League—Scandinavia Looks to her Defences—The Position of Latvia and Estonia

THE earlier history of the Second Great War, as it affected Finland and the Scandinavian countries, was told in Chapter 27, where it was related how Russia had exerted increasing pressure on Finland to concede certain facilities that the latter country felt bound to refuse. As a result, after protracted negotiations, the U.S.S.R. attacked Finland by land, sea and air on November 30, 1939. On the following day Russia set up a puppet Finnish government at Terijoki in the Karelian Isthmus, under the Finnish Communist, Otto Kuusinnen, a member of the Comintern. (For an account of the early stages of the Russo-Finnish war *see* Chapter 41).

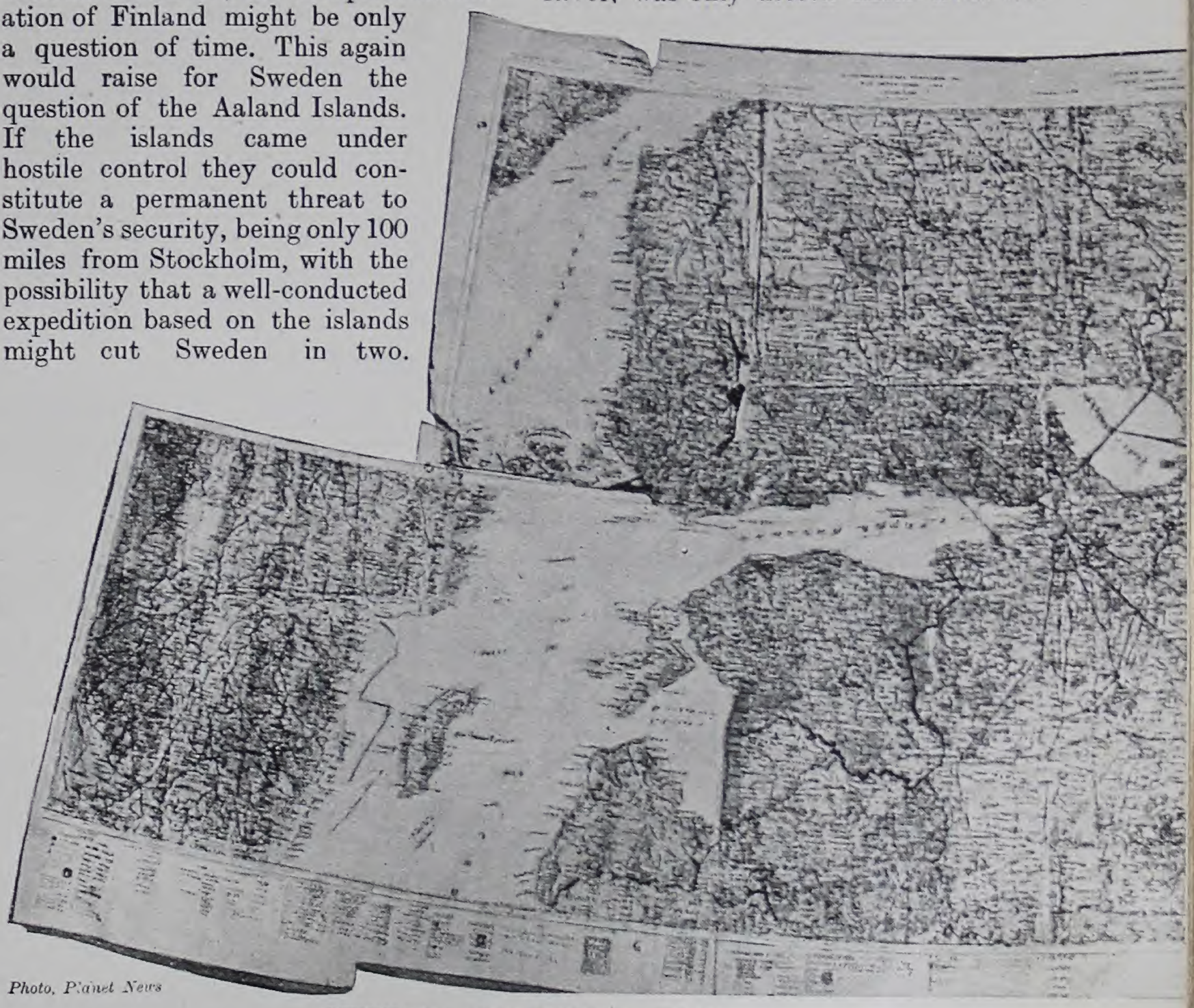
Russia's demands on and subsequent invasion of Finland confronted the Scandinavian States—Sweden, Norway, and Denmark—with new and dangerous possibilities. These possibilities were both economic and strategic. Collaboration between the Scandinavian States has been described as a "diamond with a thousand facets." In many cases their industries were interdependent. Swedish and Danish paper mills used Finnish timber. Finland's ores were complementary to those found in Sweden. Swedish engineering products were much used in Finnish sawmills and mines. There is also a natural sympathy between the Scandinavian peoples, arising out of common cultural inheritance, common commercial laws, and, in the years since 1918, a common front on certain vital aspects of trade and foreign affairs.

The Russian Menace

Sweden, the most powerful, naturally felt herself most intimately concerned. Finland had been for centuries a battleground between Sweden and Russia for domination of the Baltic. Swedish rule in Finland had initiated the progress which made Finland eventually one of the most advanced Democratic States of Europe ; and, while Sweden had abjured expansionist dreams since the peace of Nystadt in 1721 (which bereft her of her Baltic possessions south of the Gulf of Finland), self-interest dictated a suspicious attitude towards the aggressive policy of her great near-neighbour, Soviet Russia. A Soviet domination or conquest of Finland would bring the Russians right up against Sweden's jealously-guarded fortress of Boden, which protects her immense iron ore reserves, and is reputed to be the strongest in Northern Europe. Her frontier with Finland, nearly 300 miles long, would need expensive defences if Russia were to take the place of Finland as Sweden's northern neighbour.

It was evident that if Finland yielded to Soviet demands for a lease of the Rybachi Peninsula in the north, of Hangö (Hanko) at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, and of territory containing Finland's greatest defences on the Karelian Isthmus, the complete domination of Finland might be only a question of time. This again would raise for Sweden the question of the Aaland Islands. If the islands came under hostile control they could constitute a permanent threat to Sweden's security, being only 100 miles from Stockholm, with the possibility that a well-conducted expedition based on the islands might cut Sweden in two. Russian domination of Finland would, in fact, put Swedish security back to where it was in 1914—with the added menace that, whereas then Finland and Sweden's Baltic neighbours had been ruled by a friendly Tsar, the new Soviet Russia was governed by Stalin, who had ambitious plans like those of Peter the Great. In 1914 German and Russian ambitions were checked by mutual animosity, but in 1939 these two Powers had apparently joined hands.

Norway was concerned chiefly for the safety of her long Arctic coastline, in the event of Russian domination of Finland. Liinahamari, Finland's ice-free port at the mouth of the Petsamo River, was only fifteen miles from the



Photo, Planet News

SWEDEN WONDERED WHY

The Russian invasion of Finland confronted the Scandinavian countries with dangerous possibilities. Sweden, in particular, felt herself menaced, the more so when maps such as that above were found in Soviet aircraft brought down in Finland. To these maps, originally of Southern Finland and the Baltic States, a vital part of Sweden had been glued (left, bottom)

(See map of Scandinavia and the Baltic in page 186.)

Norwegian frontier. When the Russians demanded a lease of the Rybachi Peninsula, had they still more ambitious plans than control of the Petsamo Gulf? Norwegians pointed to the fact that within a few years Russia had developed Murmansk from an unimportant harbour to a town with 150,000 inhabitants. The Stalin Canal had created a direct shipping route from Leningrad; and in Polyarnoye (formerly Alexandrovsk), immediately on the Finnish frontier, Russia had made a military harbour the object of which was suspicious.

Norway was also extremely sensitive as regards Spitsbergen, which she acquired in 1920. Two-thirds of Spitsbergen's population were Russians, and from the island Norway was drawing from 10 to 20 per cent of her coal supplies. Whispers in Oslo, the Norwegian capital, that Russian maps were in existence showing parts of Northern Norway as Russian territory did nothing to allay these fears. If Russia was looking for a considerable addition to her Arctic coastline, there was only one Scandinavian country which could come into question, namely Norway.

Norway and Spitsbergen

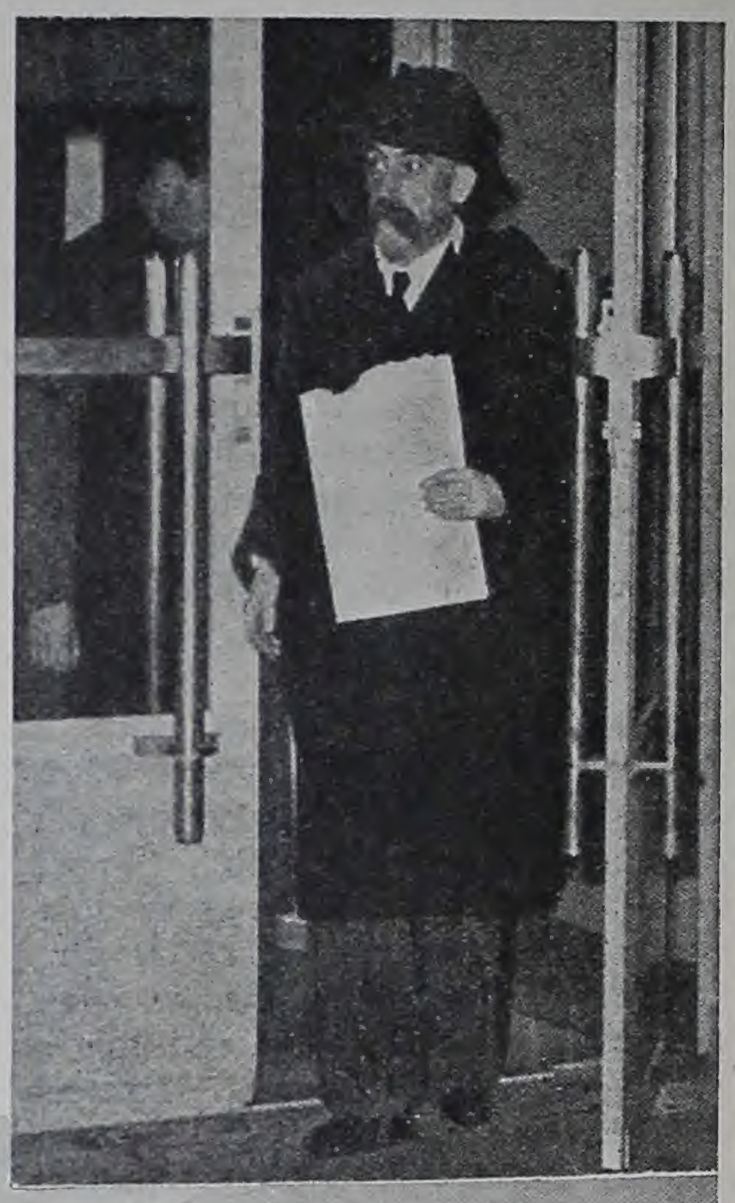
As regards little Denmark, deprived of the economic and strategic support of her Scandinavian sisters, she would come still further under the thumb of Nazi Germany, and her existence as a Sovereign State would terminate the moment she ceased to be of use to Germany as a source of food supply.

When the Scandinavian States looked to the south the prospect was equally forbidding. Since the beginning of the Second Great War Scandinavian shipping had suffered heavily through Germany's unrestricted mine and U-boat warfare. Germany, like the Allies, was intent on securing as many essential supplies as possible from Scandinavia. But whereas the Allies pursued their policy by negotiations, backed by cash, the Germans used negotiations, backed by threats. Already in the second month of the war Germany had officially warned Sweden that neutral ships in enemy convoys would be torpedoed without warning. Trade talks between Sweden and Germany were interrupted in the middle of November, and Germany at the same time, in spite of Swedish objections, announced her intention of putting down a mine barrage at the southern entrance to the Ore Sound, within what Sweden regarded as her territorial waters. Germany's admitted object was to exercise sharper control on Swedish shipping and to force large or heavily laden Swedish vessels, wishing to leave the Baltic, to use the services of a German pilot, so abandoning their territorial immunity.

Simultaneously with Russia's invasion of Finland, the German Press had begun a systematic campaign of intimidation against the Scandinavian countries. The Swedish Foreign Minister, Hr. Sandler, was attacked for "having encouraged Finland to reject the Russian proposals." The "Berliner Boersenzeitung" condemned Sweden's whole foreign policy, and laid the entire responsibility for the invasion of Finland on him. The Nazi argument was:

"Germany has always felt kindly towards the Northern Countries, but her sympathy has not been requited. The Northern Countries attached themselves to the League of Nations which Britain and France had devised to keep her down, they applied Sanctions against Italy, supported Republican Spain and criticized every one of Germany's efforts to free herself from the shackles of Versailles."

It is not surprising that the Scandinavian States should have felt themselves menaced by Germany as well as by Russia, and in many Scandinavian circles the fear was expressed that Germany and Russia had a secret arrangement for the domination and partition of Norway and Sweden. But even apart from such considerations, Germany's interests in Scandinavia were sufficiently obvious. She could not afford to let control of the entrance to the Baltic pass out of her hands, and some Swedes felt certain that she would seize Sweden's southern coast if she felt Swedish neutrality endangered



RUSSIA EXPELLED FROM THE LEAGUE

On December 2, 1939, three days after the Soviet invasion of her territory, Finland invoked the League Covenant. Below, M. Munch (left), Dr. Koht (centre) and Hr. Sandler (right), foreign ministers of Denmark, Norway and Sweden respectively, are discussing the Finnish appeal to the League, while on the right, M. Souritz, Soviet delegate, is seen leaving the Palace of the League of Nations shortly before his country was expelled from membership on December 14.

Photos, Wide World; E.N.A.



either by Russia or by the Allies; material aid from the latter countries had been promised to Finland since the League of Nations' condemnation of Russian aggression on December 11. Nor could Germany dispense with Swedish ore and agricultural produce,

The unanimous desire of the Swedish people was to render help, even to the extent of military aid, to their gallantly fighting small neighbour. But fear of Russia's new friend, Nazi Germany, was ever present and acted as a brake on Swedish desires. The statesmen of Scandinavia, conscious of their responsibilities, used their good offices to exercise a moderating influence in Moscow so long as hostilities between Russia and Finland had not begun. When, however, Finland was invaded, on November 30, they endeavoured to steer a middle course between the popular demand for active support of Finland and a policy of strict neutrality. This course consisted of the dispatch of such materials and arms as could be supplied without abandoning their neutral status. But, prepared for the worst if hostilities should be forced upon them, Sweden and Norway began to look to their defences. Denmark would doubtless have wished to do the same, but since she was unfortunately situated next to a powerful and aggressive neighbour, her preparations, if any, were not revealed.

The reactions to Russia's invasion of Finland were immediate in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. On the morning of the invasion students of Oslo University left the lecture rooms and assembled out of doors, afterwards marching to the Finnish Legation, where they sang Finnish and Norwegian national hymns and cheered the Finnish Minister. Collections were started throughout Norway for the aid of Finland. Finnish refugees, streaming with their scanty belongings in reindeer sledges from the Petsamo area into Norway, were received hospitably, although the simultaneous flight of a number of Finnish Communists caused the Norwegian authorities some embarrassment. Some of the refugees were housed in school buildings; many had relatives in Norway, especially in the neighbourhood of the frontier. More than one million kroner were collected for needy Finns; preparations were made to send a field hospital, complete with 100 beds, to Finland; and so many Norwegians volunteered to serve with the Finnish armed forces that the Norwegian military authorities were compelled to ban the departure of officers and N.C.O.s on the ground that

Support for Finland





AID FROM FINLAND'S NEIGHBOURS

In the first few days of the Finnish war great numbers of Swedes and Norwegians volunteered to serve with the Finnish forces. Above, Swedish volunteers are seen learning Finnish military terms. Right, Norwegian volunteers on skis. They are wearing white camouflage covering similar to that shown in our photographs of Finnish soldiers.

Photos, Planet News; Central Press

their services might be needed for the defence of Norway's own security.

In the first few days of the war in Finland more than 2,300 Swedes volunteered for service with the Finnish forces, among them Carl Gustaf von Rosen, the nephew of Field-Marshal Goering's Swedish-born first wife. The grey uniforms (similar to those of the Finnish Army) in which the volunteers were clothed were made in large numbers by Swedish society women, who formed themselves into groups for this purpose. The Swedish volunteers were commanded by General Ernest Linder, a close friend of Baron von Mannerheim, the Finnish Commander-in-Chief. The General had fought with von Mannerheim in Finland's first War of Independence against the Bolsheviks, assisting notably in the capture of Tampere, "Manchester of the North," in one of the two decisive battles of that war.

In order not to compromise Swedish neutrality unduly (for such assistance as the Scandinavian countries gave more or less openly to Finland was possible only because Russia had not declared war on Finland and a "state of war" did not legally exist), the Swedish volunteers received their arms and other equipment only after arrival on Finnish territory. Bureaux were opened in many Swedish cities to accept gifts for Finland. Collections of clothes were organized by the Red Cross, by newspapers, the Salvation Army, and school children; and the Swedish Government granted free transport on the State railways for all such gifts.

Sweden indeed responded nobly to the call of her sister State for help, and the gifts in money, provisions and equipment (in addition to armaments and munitions supplied under normal commercial contracts) provided one of the most remarkable instances of practical sympathy. Four private persons in Sweden gave £30,000 to M. Erkko, former Finnish Foreign Minister, to be used for Finland. The Red Cross raised £15,000 for a Finland ambulance unit within a few days of the beginning of aggression, and

the Swedish Trade Union Council made a first contribution of £30,000 to a national fund for Finland.

The Finnish war occasioned changes in both the Norwegian and Swedish Cabinets. Norway had been the only Scandinavian country which did not form a National Government on the outbreak of the Second World War. With hostilities near her frontier with Finland, however, the situation was changed. In view of violations of her neutrality both by U-boats and aircraft, and reports of Allied desires to use Norwegian harbours for the shipment of material aid to Finland, it seemed that the demands of the opposition parties to be included in a National Government could no longer be denied. Norway's Socialist Government met popular sentiment to some extent by appointing a professional soldier, Colonel Birger Ljungberg, to succeed Hr. Monsen, the Norwegian Minister for Defence.

Scandinavia Unsettled

Sweden remodelled her Cabinet (a Social-Democratic and Agrarian coalition) into a National coalition under the existing Premier, Hr. Hansson. Also the Government made one last effort to mediate between Finland and Russia. Acting on the request of the Finnish Government, the Swedish Minister, two days after hostilities had begun, expressed Finland's desire to enter into fresh negotiations with the Soviet Government for a peaceful settlement. But it was now too late. Moscow's reply, given on the wireless on December 5, was abrupt. It stated that M. Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Commissar, did not recognize this "so-called" Government and that there could be no question of negotiations with it.

The Foreign Ministers of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden met in Oslo on December 7, 1939, to discuss Finland's appeal to the League of Nations and the situation arising out of Russian aggression against Finland. Five days later, much to the regret of a large part of Sweden's population, came the resignation of Hr. Sandler, Sweden's popular Foreign Minister, who advocated joint defence of Finno-Swedish neutrality. Hr. Sandler had been the object of bitter Nazi Press attacks. He was succeeded by Hr. Christian Günthers, an experienced politician with no pronounced views. This appointment was a concession to Nazi opinion and a further stage in Sweden's cautious policy of active material help for Finland, without committing herself to military support.

In the meantime, Sweden rapidly strengthened her defences. A Law of National Service in case of war or the danger of war was passed. It empowered the authorities to compel citizens between the ages of 16 and 70 (including women) to remain in their employment or take on other employment as the needs of the country's defence or economy should warrant. A Bill restricting civil liberties in the event of emergency was also passed. Large contingents of conscripts for service mainly in the province of Norrland (in the north), on the Island of Gothland, and on the coastal fortifications were called up, and the discharge of called-up conscripts was partly cancelled.

Two important military appointments were announced. Lt.-General Thoernell, Chief of the Defence Staff, a soldier of international reputation, was made Commander-in-Chief of the Swedish defences. This unprecedented step in Swedish history was symptomatic of the earnest view the Swedish Government took of the possibilities arising out of the Russian aggression against Finland. King Gustav also appointed General Nygren as general officer commanding for Sweden's vital northern frontier districts. In an Order of the Day General Nygren reminded his men of the critical situation and the problems before them, and expressed his confidence in their loyalty and efficiency.

At the same time the military forces on the northern frontier, which in normal times consist of two infantry regiments, one cavalry and heavy artillery regiment and a field artillery and engineer corps, were considerably increased. A new minefield was laid at Oergrund, south of Stockholm.

Norway's military preparations, which had already been speeded up on the outbreak of hostilities between the Allies and Germany, received further impetus with the ordering of 12 Heinkel flying boats from Germany and 24 Curtiss Hawk fighters from the United States. Assurances were sought and obtained from Britain that eight motor torpedo boats already on order would be delivered promptly, and also six Gloster-Gladiator machines for the air force. It was announced that the productive capacity of Norway's national aircraft factory had been trebled, while stocks of coal for the railways, sugar, coffee, oil and textiles were accumulated for many months ahead.

One of the reasons for the speed with which the Russians had pressed their demands on the eastern Baltic States and equipped the naval and air bases ceded to them now became apparent. The bases at Baltiski Port near Tallinn and on the Estonian islands of Dago and Oesel were, it was reliably reported, used by Soviet aircraft as a convenient jumping-off place for the bombing of Finnish objectives, being much nearer to Helsinki, Hanko (Hangö) and Turku (Abo) than aerodromes in Russia proper. Finland's struggle aroused great sympathy among the populations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. They recalled that Finnish volunteers had helped them to obtain their own independence in the struggle against the Bolsheviks in the early years following the First Great War. But with key points in their territory occupied by Russian naval and air forces, as a result of the agreements concluded with Soviet Russia, the three countries were powerless to assist Finland.

Latvia Shows Strength

That no love was lost between the garrisoned Russian forces and the Latvian population was evidenced by reports that the Russians were having the greatest difficulty in getting Latvian workmen to work on the defences of Windau (Ventspils)—one of the bases Russia had taken over—in spite of high wage offers. Latvia, it was also reported, was reorganizing and strengthening her army, determined to show, if necessary, that, although she had yielded to Russian demands in granting trade and military facilities, she still regarded herself as an independent state.

Much speculation was aroused by a summons to General Laidoner, the commander of the Estonian Army, to go to Moscow. Rumour spoke of Russian desires to enlist Estonian help against Finland, but another story was that Russia feared a rising in Estonia.

News from both Latvia and Estonia was very restricted, in view of their delicate strategic position, but it was not unreasonable to assume that Finland's successful resistance to Russia in the early stages of the war had aroused regrets among Estonians and Latvians that they themselves had complied so readily with Russia's drastic demands. Pro-Russian circles in these countries, on the other hand, derived comfort from the fact that apparently Russia was observing her undertaking not to interfere in their internal economy. Private business, subject to war restrictions, was carried on as usual, and no attempt was made to Bolshevize the internal economy.

At the same time, however, Russia pushed forward feverishly the construction of heavy gun emplacements, breakwaters and underground hangars on the bases leased to her, with what object only the future would show.

PROTECTORS OF BRITAIN'S SHIPPING WATCH THE AIR

Flying boats of the Coastal Command R.A.F. kept ceaseless watch over Britain's shipping after war began. Above, one pilot is seen at the controls of a Short "Sunderland," while the other signals with an Aldis lamp. Below, we see gunners at their midships posts, on the alert for any signs of the enemy. Their machine-guns are manually trained Vickers K's.

Photos, P.N.A.



BOCHE BOMBER THAT FELL IN FRANCE

British Official Photograph: Crown Copyright

Communiqués from the Western Front, laconic though they were, pointed to the great success of Anglo-French air co-operation, and when this was supplemented by eye-witness accounts it became evident that from the first the Allies had obtained the mastery of the air. In this photograph personnel of the French Air Force are towing through the streets of a French town the wreckage of a big German aircraft brought down. The French lads have evidently been indulging in a little wishful thinking, for on the nose of the 'plane is hung the inscription, "Here Lies Hitler!"



FINNS' BIG HAUL OF SOVIET SUPPLIES

In the course of the many Finnish victories over the Soviet troops in December, 1939, a vast amount of material was captured. The Russian lorries seen above formed part of a convoy captured by Finns on the north bank of the River Kemi, in the Salla region. The lorries were loaded with war supplies and were defended by tanks and cavalry

Photo, Planet News



SOVIET BOMBERS LEAVE A FINNISH VILLAGE IN FLAMES

Though, as pointed out in Chapter 143, it appeared that the Russians never attempted to crush Finnish resistance by ruthless air bombing on the German scale, a number of big towns were attacked from the air, while the bombing of road and rail communications caused much incidental damage to villages in the vicinity

Photo, Central Press

Historic Documents. LXXV—LXXIX

RUSSIA'S INVASION OF FINLAND

After presenting to Finland a series of territorial demands, to some of which that democratic little country found it impossible to accede, the Soviet Government denounced the Non-Aggression Pact with Finland signed in 1932, and suddenly launched an attack on November 30, 1939. Some of the documents dealing with this conflict are given below.

REPLY OF FINNISH GOVERNMENT, NOVEMBER 28, 1939, TO RUSSIAN DEMAND FOR WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS FROM FRONTIER NEAR LENINGRAD:

It is established that the discharge of cannon shots mentioned in your communication did not take place on the Finnish side. Investigation showed instead that on November 26 between 3.45 p.m. and 4.5 p.m. firing occurred on the Russian side of the frontier in the vicinity of Mainila. the place mentioned by you. . .

Therefore it is our duty to deny, protest and establish the fact that from the Finnish side no hostile action towards the Soviet Union has taken place. It should be pointed out that on the Finnish side of the frontier only frontier guards are stationed, and there is no artillery whose range would reach the other side of the frontier.

Consequently, although this is no concrete reason to remove our troops from the frontier line in the manner you suggested, the Government is nevertheless ready to negotiate with the Soviet Union on the proposal with the intention that troops be removed from both sides to a fixed distance from the frontier. . . . In order that no obscurity whatever may remain in any circumstances, the Finnish Government suggests that the Karelian Isthmus Frontier Commission be instructed jointly to investigate in the manner regulated by the treaty of October 24 1938, concerning frontier demarcation.

M. MOLOTOV IN A BROADCAST TO THE SOVIET PEOPLES, NOVEMBER 29, 1939:

The hostile policy of the present Finnish Government compels us to take immediate steps to safeguard the external security of our State. You all know that the Soviet Government had patiently negotiated on certain proposals which, in view of the present international tension, the Soviet considered to be the minimum guarantee for the safety of our country, and in particular Leningrad. During these negotiations the Finnish Government adopted an irreconcilable attitude towards our country. Instead of attempting to find a friendly basis for an understanding the present leaders, acting in the interests of foreign imperialists and warmongers, who are the enemies of the Soviet Union, elected to take a different course.

It is well known where this has led. There has been abominable provocation by the Finnish military on the Finnish-Soviet frontier during the past few days. Our soldiers were even shelled by artillery near Leningrad, and heavy casualties were caused among the Red troops. Our efforts to prevent a repetition of such provocations by practical proposals put to Finland have met with no response, and even evoked a hostile attitude in Finnish leading circles.

As you all know from yesterday's Soviet Note, the Finns have replied by rejecting our proposals and by denying established facts. They have even jeered at our victims. Their reply shows their undisguised desire to continue their threat to Leningrad. All this has made it quite clear that the present Finnish Government, who are entangled in anti-Soviet commitments to foreign imperialists, do not wish to maintain normal relations with the Soviet Union. They show no desire to comply with the provisions of the Non-Aggression Pact, and want to keep our glorious Leningrad under military threat.

From such a militarist Government we can expect nothing but fresh impertinent provocation. The Soviet Government were therefore compelled yesterday to declare that they do not consider themselves any longer bound by the Non-Aggression Pact.

In view of fresh attacks by Finnish troops on the frontier our Government found themselves compelled to take new decisions. We can no longer tolerate the present situation, for which the Finnish Government bear full responsibility. Our Government have decided that they can no longer maintain normal relations with Finland and have considered it necessary to recall their diplomatic representatives. Furthermore, the High Command of the Red Army has ordered the Army and Navy to be in readiness for any eventuality the Army and Navy to be in readiness for any eventuality in order to prevent possible fresh provocation by the Finnish military. These measures have not been taken, as has been alleged abroad, with a view to violating Finnish independence or annexing Finnish territory. This is a perfidious calumny. We have no such intentions. . . . The only aim of our nation is to safeguard the security of the Soviet Union, and in particular of Leningrad, with its population of 3,500,000.

LETTER ADDRESSED BY M. HOLSTI, FINNISH DELEGATE, TO M. AVENOL, SEC.-GEN. OF LEAGUE OF NATIONS, DEC. 2, 1939:

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with which Finland, since the signature of the treaty of peace at Tartu in 1920, has maintained neighbourly relations, and signed a pact of non-aggression which should have expired in 1945, unexpectedly attacked on the morning of November 30, not only frontier positions, but also open Finnish towns, spreading death and destruction among the civil population, more particularly by attacks from the air.

Finland has never engaged in any undertaking directed against her powerful neighbour. She has continuously made every effort to live at peace with her.

Nevertheless, alleging so-called frontier incidents and adducing the alleged refusal of Finland to acquiesce in strengthening the security of Leningrad, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics first denounced the above-mentioned pact of non-aggression, and then refused the Finnish Government's proposal to have recourse to the mediation of a neutral Power.

In consequence, acting on the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to bring the foregoing facts to your knowledge, and to request you, in virtue of Articles 11 and 15 of the Covenant, forthwith to summon a meeting of the Council and Assembly, and ask them to take the necessary measures to put an end to this aggression.

I will forward in due course a complete statement of the reasons and circumstances which led my Government to request the intervention of the League of Nations. . . .

M. MOLOTOV TO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS DECEMBER 4, 1939:

In the name of the Soviet Government, I have the honour to reply that the convocation of the Council on M. Holsti's initiative is considered as unwarranted by my Government. The Soviet Government is not at war with Finland and does not threaten it, so that the reference to Article 11 of the Covenant of the League is incorrect.

The Soviet Union has a pact with the People's Democratic Republic of Finland which regulates all questions which negotiations with the former Finnish Government failed to achieve. The People's Democratic Government appealed to the Soviet Union for military assistance to liquidate the war danger created by the former Finnish Government. M. Holsti's application lacks a legal basis for calling the Council. since M. Holsti and his superiors do not represent the Finnish people. The Soviet Union will not take part if the Council is convoked for December 9. . . .

RESOLUTION EXPELLING RUSSIA FROM LEAGUE OF NATIONS DECEMBER 14, 1939:

The Council, having taken cognizance of the resolution adopted by the Assembly on December 14, 1939. regarding the appeal of the Finnish Government, (1) associates itself with the condemnation by the Assembly of the action of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics against the Finnish State, and (2) for the reasons set forth in the resolution of the Assembly, in virtue of Article 16, paragraph 4, of the Covenant, finds that, by its act, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has placed itself outside the League of Nations. It follows that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is no longer a member of the League.

Chapter 41

FINLAND STEMMED THE RUSSIAN INVASION: WAR ON EIGHT FRONTS

Soviet's Demands—Why Finland Resisted—Finland Invaded—Karelian Isthmus Battles—Salmi Sector—Russian Débâcle on the Suojärvi Front—Lieksa and Kuhmo Sectors—Finnish Victory of Suomussalmi : Rout of the 163rd Division—Salla Changes Hands—Petsamo Area

(*A later review of the campaign, by Major-General Sir Charles Gwynn, is given in Chapter 143*)

WHILE the menace of the magnetic mine and British reprisals to this new form of Totalitarian sea warfare filled the headlines of the Press in the latter part of November, a development occurred in Northern Europe which brought in its train the possibility of a drastic extension of the field of hostilities between the Allies and Germany. This was the invasion of Finland by Soviet Russia, failing the satisfaction of certain territorial demands. Finland's small population of 3,500,000 souls (who had obtained their independence after more than a century of Russian domination at the end of 1917) showed their mettle and morale by resisting the demands of an overwhelmingly powerful enemy. The hopes of small nations all over the world became centred in the valiant struggle of "the gallant little 'Belgium' of the Second Great War." Finland, an advanced Democratic State, enjoyed a universally good reputation, especially in the United States, where she was the only belligerent of the First Great War to honour her debt obligations. Her people were generous, honest and courageous. Her refusal to cede territory identified her with the principle for which the Allies went to war—the right of small nations to an independent existence. Her strategic situation was such that none of the powerful belligerents could be indifferent to her fate.

The Soviet's demands on Finland are outlined in Chapter 27. Russia was concerned for the safety of Leningrad and for her own security as far as that was affected by future relations with Finland. To ensure the safety of Leningrad she proposed that :

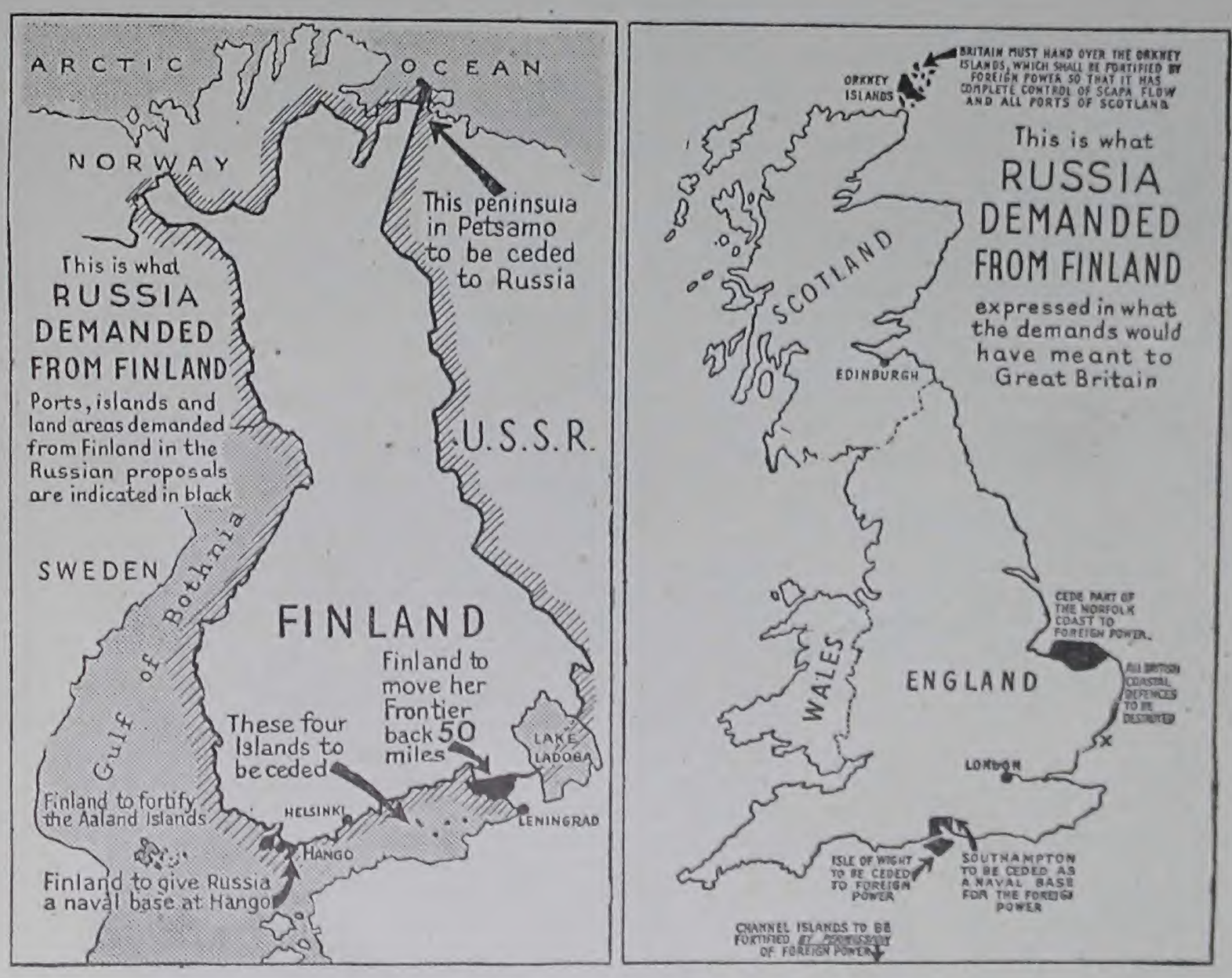
1. The Finnish frontier on the Isthmus of Karelia be moved farther back;
2. The port of Hangö (Hanko) at the entrance of the Gulf of Finland be leased to Russia as an army and air base with permission for Soviet naval forces to use the neighbouring bay of Lappohja;
3. Cession of certain Finnish islands in the Gulf of Finland;
4. Suppression of fortified zones on both sides of the frontier between Finland and the Soviet Union.

As to future relations with Finland, Russia suggested that Finland should undertake not to join any groups or alliances directly or indirectly hostile to either of the Contracting Parties. Russia also maintained that the frontier between Finland and Russia in the extreme north was unskilfully drawn, and demanded the lease of the Rybachi Peninsula with Finland's only ice-free port, Petsamo. The two maps printed in this page show the Russian demands with an analogy of what similar demands would have meant to Britain.

Finns' Reply

Finland's reply was conciliatory but firm. She emphasized her desire to maintain friendly relations with the Soviet, but, while willing to consider means for meeting the requirements of the Soviet Union, added that "naturally this is conditional upon the requirements of Finland's own security being taken into consideration and upon care being observed to maintain Finland's complete neutrality." She agreed to the cession against territorial compensation of the islands Russia demanded, except as regards the island of Suursaari, for which Finland was willing to discuss an arrangement. Finland agreed to rectification of the frontier on the Isthmus of Karelia, notably with the object of removing the so-called Kuokkala bend, but was not willing to sacrifice her fortifications and population in the territory in question to the extent demanded by Russia.

Hangö, for reasons of Finland's integrity, could not be leased to Russia; while, as regards Russia's proposal for ensuring future good relations between the two countries, Finland maintained that her existing Non-Aggression Pact with Russia covered every foreseeable contingency. In return for the sacrifices required by the Soviet Government,



PARALLEL TO THE KREMLIN'S CLAIMS

The map on the left shows the vital territorial demands which Soviet Russia made upon Finland in October, 1939. On the right is a map of Britain, showing what equivalent demands upon this country would have meant. (From maps issued by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

Finland was offered 2,134 square miles of territory in Soviet Karelia. The talks between Finland and Russia on these points began on October 5, 1939. They ended after eight discussions with the return of the Finnish delegates from Moscow on November 13, when a deadlock had been reached. Finland was adamant in her determination not to yield; Russia was insistent on her original demands.

Briefly the Soviet's argument was as follows, as outlined in the Russian Press: The island of Hangö (to be leased) would enable her to mount batteries of long-range guns with which to command the entrance to the Gulf of Finland—in conjunction with batteries on Dagö and others on the Estonian coast. Similarly, a naval base at Hangö would enable Soviet warships to co-operate with others based on the leased Estonian port of Baltiski and thus to safeguard the approach to Leningrad. In short, Russia wished to secure the "keys to the Gulf." Further, Leningrad could not be regarded as secure unless the Soviet also obtained the use of the





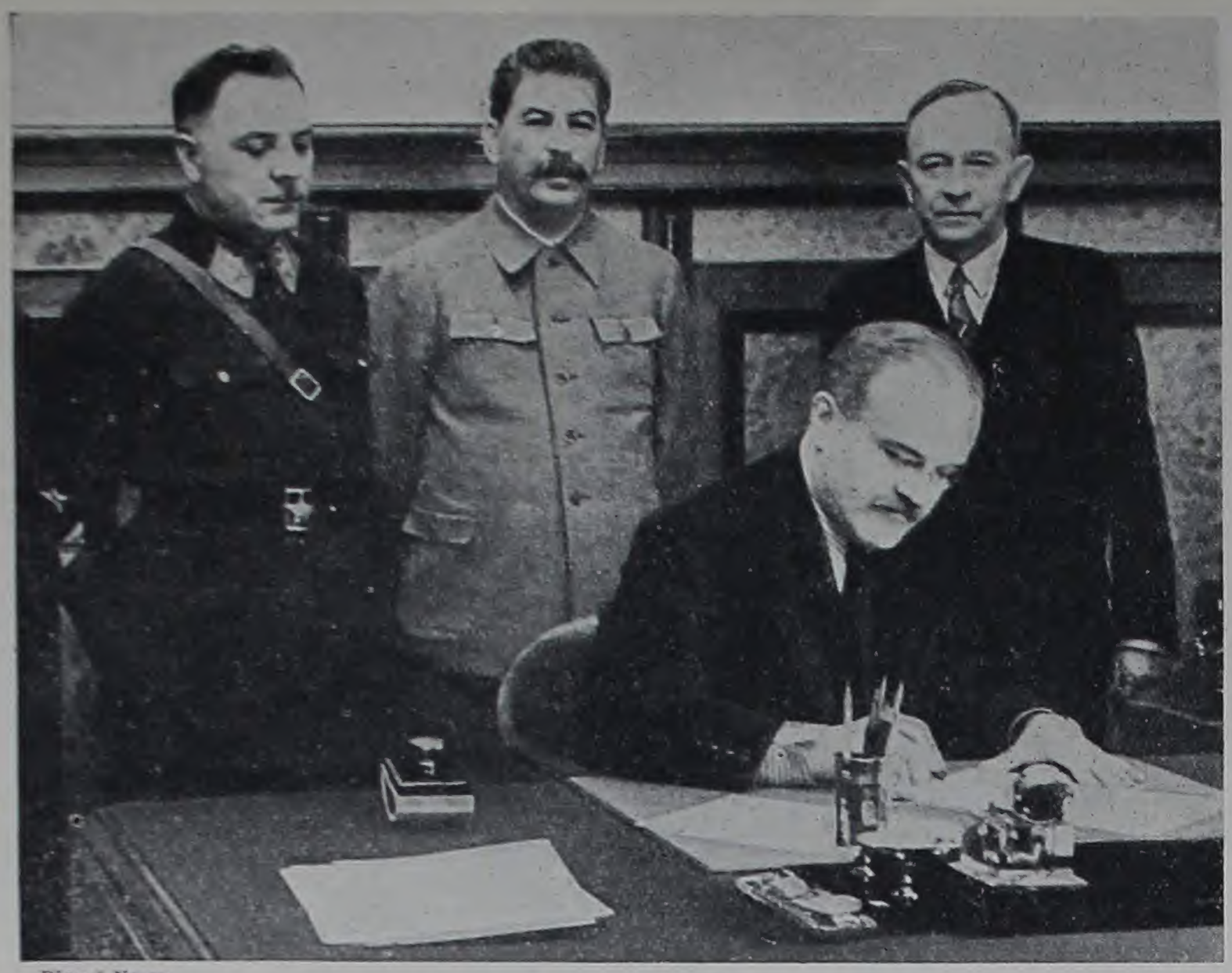
TWO LEADERS OF A BRAVE PEOPLE

When the Soviet army invaded his country, Marshal Mannerheim (above), the leader of the 'Whites' against the 'Reds' in the Civil War of 1918, once more took up the fight against the Russians as supreme leader of the Finnish forces. Left, President Kiosti Kallio is seen inspecting the defences of the Mannerheim Line.

Photos, Central Press; Press Topics

four small islands in the middle of the Gulf. From the Russian point of view, also, the position of Leningrad on the landward side was extraordinary, with the Finnish frontier only some twenty miles from the former Russian capital.

It was not put forth that the Soviet doubted the pacific intentions of Finland herself, but the argument was that if Finnish territory should be utilized by



Planet News

STILLBORN AGREEMENT WITH PUPPET STATE

After their invasion of Finland, the Russians set up in a captured Finnish village a puppet government under Otto Kuusinnen, a Finnish Communist. Above, Molotov, the Russian Foreign Commissar, is seen signing a 'treaty of mutual assistance and friendship' with Kuusinnen's government. Standing, from left to right, are Voroshilov, Stalin, and Kuusinnen.

another Power for an attack upon Russia the Soviet would be greatly handicapped by the strategic situation as determined by existing frontiers.

Four days before the Russian invasion commenced, Moscow announced that Finnish artillery on the Karelian Isthmus had fired seven rounds which fell on Soviet territory, one kilometre north-west of Mainil, killing four Red Army men. On the same day M. Molotov handed a note to the Finnish Minister in Moscow proposing that Finnish troops should be removed 12 to 15 miles from the frontier. The Soviet Government "did not wish to exaggerate the importance of this incident, for which troops badly led by their commander were probably responsible." Finland protested (*see* Historic Documents, No. 75) that on the day of the alleged incident there was no Finnish artillery unit in the area in question which could possibly have reached Soviet territory.

Clash on the Frontier

The mobilization of Finnish troops on the Karelian frontier was alleged by M. Molotov to be a hostile act against the Soviet Union, although Russia had begun mobilization in the Leningrad district as far back as September, 1939. On November 28 M. Molotov denounced the Non-Aggression Pact between Finland and Russia. The next day Moscow broke off diplomatic relations with Finland. In spite of last-minute intermediation by the United States, on November 30, 1939, Russia began a military campaign against Finland.

If anyone had prophesied at the beginning of the Second Great War that the "Land of a Thousand Lakes," with its peaceful, industrious inhabitants, its reindeer, Lapps and ski racers, would be among the first to experience the true horrors of warfare, the idea would have been held fantastic. But on the last day of November war came to Finland. At 9.15 a.m. the inhabitants of Helsinki gazed with consternation at the blue winter sky, which echoed the ominous drone of approaching Soviet warplanes. Simultaneously Red Army men launched attacks at eight points along Finland's 1,000-mile-long frontier.

(Finnish names are rather complicated, and it will simplify understanding of the Russo-Finnish war if a few constantly recurring terminations are memorized: "järvi" means lake; "joki" is river; "salmi" is strait.)

The eight fronts or sectors at which the attempted Russian invasion took place were, from south to north:

1. The Karelian Isthmus: the 50-mile-wide neck of land separating the Gulf of Finland from the waters of Lake Ladoga.
2. Salmi, on the north-eastern bank of Lake Ladoga, near the junction of the Finnish and Russian frontiers.
3. Suojärvi, about 60 miles north of Salmi, scene of Russia's second big defeat.
4. Lieksa (Liekaa), on Lake Pielinen.
5. Kuhmo, 50 miles north of Lieksa.
6. Suomussalmi, in Finland's "wasp waist," scene of Russia's first big defeat.
7. Salla, nearly half-way between Suomussalmi and the Arctic Ocean.
8. Petsamo, Finland's ice-free port on the Arctic Ocean.

Reds' Strategy

The Russian simultaneous attack on Finland by air, sea and land emulated the method of Nazi Germany's attack on Poland. The launching of Red Army troops at eight different points along the Finnish-Russian frontier seemed to have the same object as Hitler's campaign in Poland—to threaten so many points at once that no reinforcements could be spared for any especially endangered sector; to achieve a break-through which would enable the flanks of the still resisting Finnish armies to be turned; and meanwhile, by means of parachute troops and repeated bombing, to cause dislocation in the rear of the Finns. But Baron von Mannerheim, the Finnish C.-in-C., had envisaged a further attempt at Russian invasion ever since he had beaten the Bolsheviks in 1918; as a former Russian General he accurately predicted Soviet tactics. The highly trained Finnish Army of some 200,000 men knew the country in which it would have to fight, and took full advantage of its forests, swamps and lakes.

Baron von Mannerheim anticipated that the heaviest Russian attacks would be made on the Karelian Isthmus. Previous Russian campaigns had always followed this route—crossing the Isthmus, working along the coast of the Gulf of Finland, and then turning north along the shores of the Gulf of Bothnia, cutting off every Finnish communication with the rest of Europe. The Finns, therefore, attached the greatest importance to holding the Russians on this front, and the result was the construction of the so-called Mannerheim Line on the Isthmus. This consists of a 20-mile-deep zone of defences running from south to north. Its most southerly point is on a line drawn eastwards from Koivisto Island in the Gulf of Finland to Taipale on Lake Ladoga. Its most northerly point is between the towns of Viipuri and Käkisalmi.

The backbone of the Mannerheim Line on the Karelian Isthmus is the water system of the Vuoksi River, which follows a most irregular course. It comes from the north and branches in lakes to the east and to the west; it converts the low, undulating hills of the

Karelian Isthmus into a death-trap of spongy grass, marsh and lake, afforested in parts, with few roads and few railways. When to these natural obstacles are added tank traps, machine-gun nests, trenches, dams, and a determined and skilful enemy, some idea of the difficulties of an invader can be imagined.

Three main phases of the Russian offensive on the Isthmus can be distinguished. The first was an attempt to turn the western wing of the defences on November 30, when, without any declaration of war, the Russian batteries opened fire. The Finns abandoned Terijoki and a number of small villages in accordance with pre-arranged plans, but took 1,200 prisoners and destroyed 19 Russian tanks in the process. Thereafter Russian attacks on the western wing were only spasmodic, consisting chiefly of naval bombardments and aerial bombing of the Koivisto coastal batteries. Finding the western defences too strong, the Russians turned their attention to the centre and east wing of of the Mannerheim Line.

Undeclared War

The first serious attempt to turn the Mannerheim defences in the east began on December 7, when the Russians launched a fierce attack across the Taipale River, one of the eastern outlets of the Vuoksi water system. On the rising afforested slopes of the northern bank of this river were concealed the Finnish batteries and machine-gun nests. As the Russians endeavoured to cross they were met with a murderous fire at point-blank range, and after heavy losses they abandoned the attempt. Then the Russians tried to land behind the Finnish defenders by the use of motor boats on Lake Ladoga. But the boats were smashed by the lake coastal defence batteries of the Finns. By December 17 the river and lake had frozen and the Russians made their final attacks over the ice, losing 14 of the 50 tanks they employed in this attempt.

Alternating with their attempts to cross the Taipale, the Russians made heavy attacks on the Finnish centre at Lake Suvanto. The fighting started at Kiviniemi, south of the lake, on December 8. Further attacks followed at Muolajärvi and Kaukjärvi towards the middle of the month. The Finns smashed bottles of petrol against the Russian tanks on the approaches to the lake; Finnish riflemen picked off Red soldiers by the score. At one point 700 Russian dead were left on the frozen surface of the lake. Nevertheless, with the unimaginative courage common to their race, the Russians came on in unending streams. The Finns were forced to retreat in the centre, but on December 22 they counter-attacked, thus taking the initiative for the first time on the Karelian Isthmus. The Russian losses in material and men had been enormous. In one week, on the central Karelian front, the Finns claimed to have captured 128 Russian tanks. In the two days of December 15 and 16, 30 Russian tanks were destroyed. The Arctic frosts were as great an enemy of Russian mechanization as the Finns. Many tanks and armoured cars were abandoned, immobilized in the snow and ice. Defeated in their frontal attacks, the Russians bombarded Viipuri, headquarters of the Finnish Karelian Command, with long-range guns whose shells made craters twelve feet in diameter.

On the second front (the Salmi sector), on the north-eastern shores of Lake Ladoga, where the Finnish and Russian boundaries meet, the Red Army could report superficial progress at the end of the first month's fighting. Russian troops, estimated at a division, had advanced 40 miles into Finnish territory, and the Finns had withdrawn to prepared positions on the Koirinoja River.

Very different was the story on the Suojärvi Front. Here, in the region of Tolvajärvi and Aglajärvi, the Russians suffered one of their two outstanding

SOVIET SHELLS FIRE A FINNISH VILLAGE

The photograph below, which reached London on December 22, 1939, was one of the first to be taken in the war zone on the Karelian Isthmus. Standing out against the snow is a pall of smoke rising from a Finnish village set on fire by Soviet shells.

Photo, Planet News



defeats of the first month of hostilities. Early in December they had occupied a small strip of territory at Suojärvi, which is a few miles inside the Finnish border. Their object was evidently to cut the railway between Joensuu and Sortavala, which would have served them for an advance to the north or south, outflanking the Mannerheim defences. On December 11 Russian shock troops, estimated at two divisions (one of which was in reserve), advanced from Petroski, which is connected by a branch line with the Leningrad-Murmansk railway, to the eastern shore of Lake Tolva. This lake is shaped like an elongated figure eight. A long bent finger of spruce-covered land comes out from its eastern side and almost cuts it in two. The main road from the Russian frontier rides on the top of this narrow finger. Then a bridge links it with the western shore.

The Tolva Death-trap

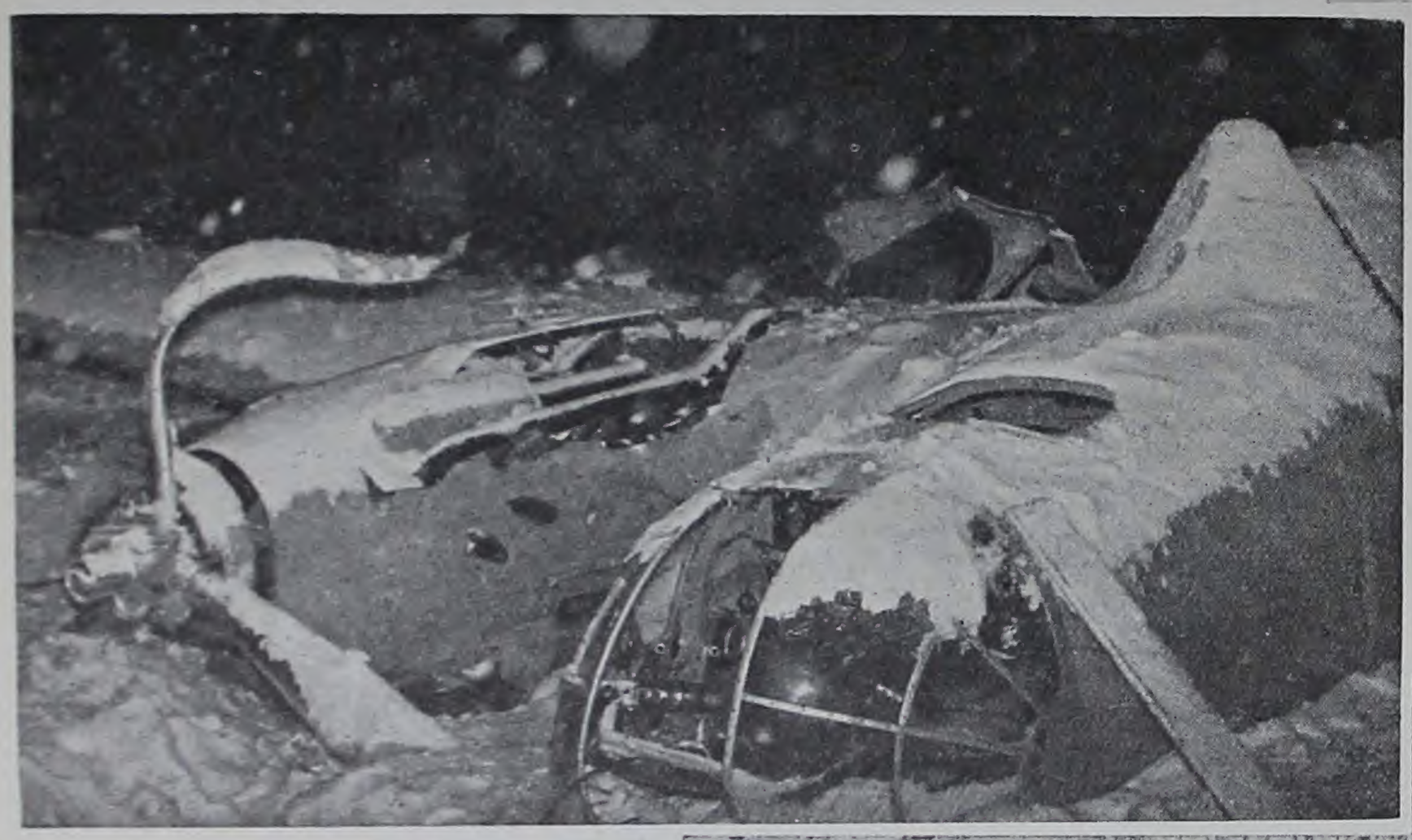
The Russians poured great masses of men over the " finger," but they rushed into a trap. The Finns had their artillery and machine-guns hidden in the forest at both ends of the lake, so that they could reach the narrow peninsula which forms the waist-line of the " figure eight." In the night two Finnish companies penetrated through the thick forest to the rear of the Russian lines and viciously machine-gunned the Russians. They slipped away again swiftly and left the two bodies of Russian troops to fight each other in the darkness for two hours, each mistaking the other for Finns. On December 13 the Finns opened fire from both sides of the lake, and 38 Finns charged the bridge which led to the peninsula, now raked from both sides with heavy fire. Only eight of the men got across, but they captured the Russian guns at the bridgehead, turned them on the enemy, and the way was opened for the destruction of virtually the entire Soviet division.

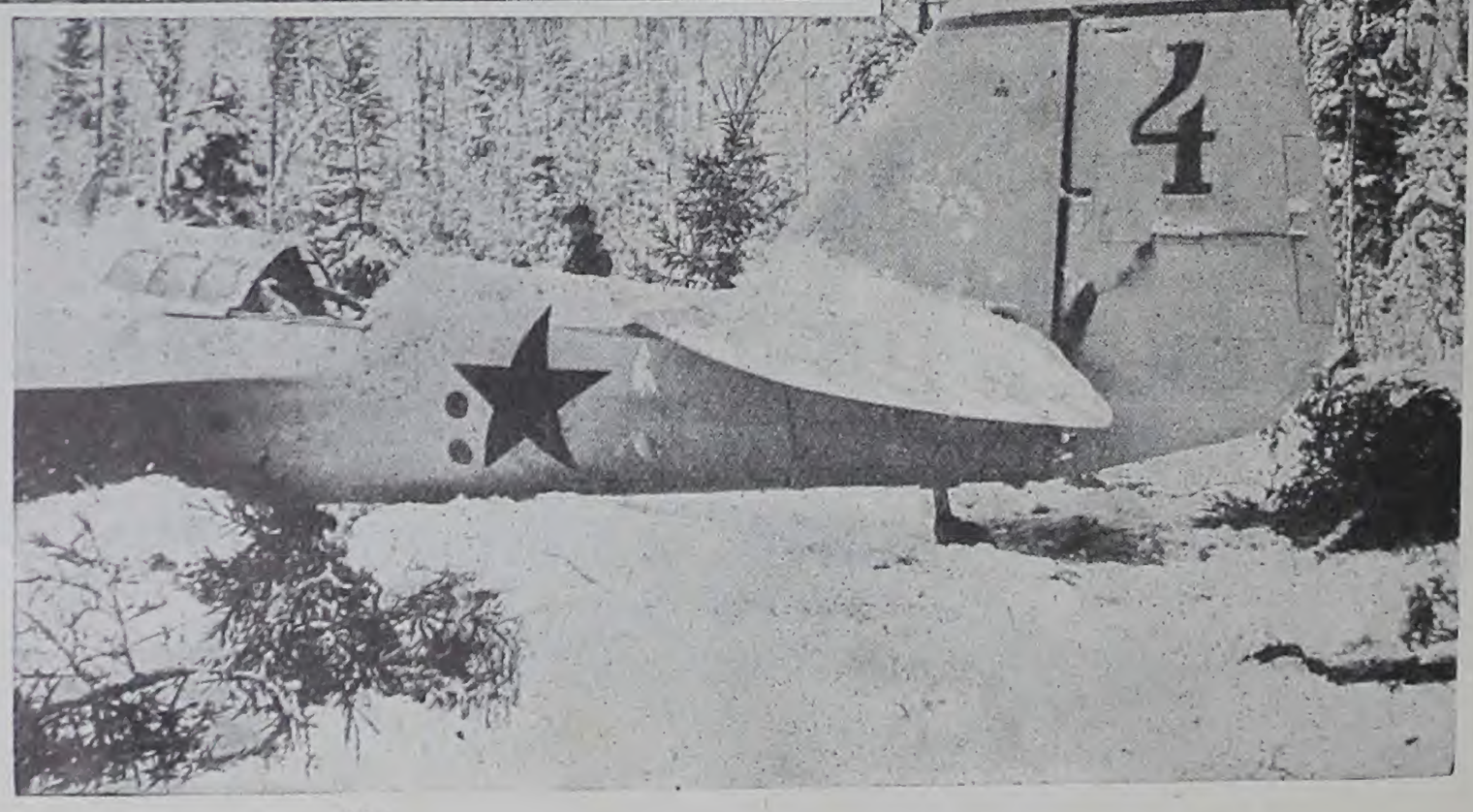
By nightfall the next day hundreds of Russian dead were strewn on the snow around the peninsula. The Finns closed their pincers from both ends of the lake and the few surviving Russian soldiers ran frantically in headlong retreat. For the next eight days the Finns pressed the Russians relentlessly. The latter threw in their reserve division, but at Lake Agla their defeat was completed. Vivid pictures of this disaster were painted by correspondents who visited the front. One wrote

" One need only travel the twenty miles of winding road through heavily forested territory from Lake Tolva eastward to Lake Agla to see incessant testimony of the Russians' overwhelming defeat.

" We found barbed wire obstacles at every turn. Occasional wide stretches of fir trees had been levelled to permit open terrain for artillery and machine-gun fire. We passed scores of abandoned Russian trucks, and







HEAVY LOSSES OF RED AIR FORCE

Although it began with a great numerical superiority, the Red Air Force suffered heavily in combat with the Finns. By Jan. 20, 1940, the Russians had lost over 200 aeroplanes. Our photographs show, above, Soviet 'planes flying over Helsinki ; left, a Russian machine brought down by Finnish anti-aircraft fire ; below, a Red Air Force 'plane, brought down almost intact in a snow-covered forest.

Photos, Associated Press ; Central Press ; Wide World

others loaded with captured war material, being driven back into Finland. Again and again we came across disabled Russian tanks, pushed in ditches beside the road. Sometimes they were single tanks, sometimes we came across three or four lying wrecked in a row. Once we got out and saw some evidence of the extremely powerful Finnish anti-tank guns—gaping holes, two inches wide or more, which had been cut clean through the tank's thick armament. Most of the tanks, however, had been destroyed by hand grenades or inflammatory explosives tossed under their tracks by daring Finnish soldiers who had waited in deep holes close beside the road.

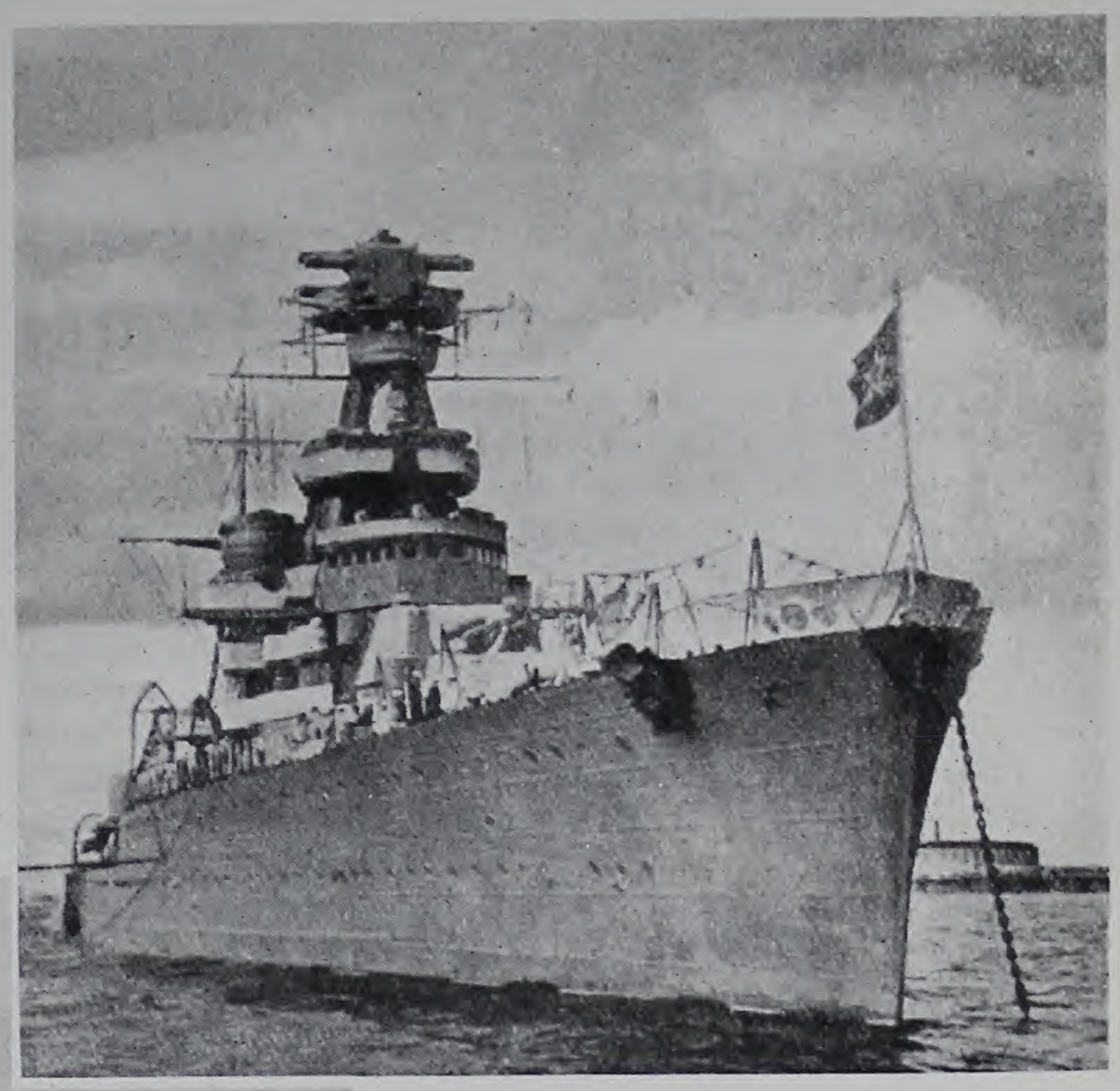
"Inside one of these tanks were the charred remains of its Russian occupants—all four in ghastly postures which somehow resembled those of Polynesian dancers. We counted more than forty such tanks, and several more were said to have plunged off bridges and disappeared beneath the waters of the lake.

"In the forests on either side of the road were hundreds of crude shelters which had been built by the Russians when they came in. They were flimsy shelters made of spruce branches, completely incapable of providing any warmth in this Arctic climate.

"Horses of the Red Army had gnawed the bark from the trunks of the trees. The Russians had pressed forward to Lake Tolva without bringing more than a day's supply of hay for their horses."

Of the men of the two or more Russian divisions employed on the Suojärvi front the greater part were killed, frozen to death, captured or wounded in the battle, which was fought in temperatures ranging from 13 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit below zero. In addition, the Russians lost 60 tanks, 3 armoured cars, 14 field guns, 16 anti-tank guns, 216 heavy machine-guns, 86 light machine-guns and a great many rifles. Most of the Russian wounded were frozen to death where they fell. Many men ran wildly into the forest and perished from cold. A significant feature of this defeat was that the Russian troops were not the ill-trained, badly equipped levies used at first against the Mannerheim Line. Most of them were between 20 and 28 years old, well clad and equipped, and members of the Comsomol, which trains picked youths for entry into the Communist Party.

The battle of Tolvajärvi had important reactions on the Lieksa (Liekaa) sector—the next to the north. The Russians were reported advancing towards Nurmes, an important town on the railway running from Lake Ladoga to the Swedish frontier, on December 6. Following the rout of the Russians at Tolvajärvi and the consequent disorganization behind their lines, Finnish storm battalions were able to cross into Russian territory opposite Lieksa on Christmas Eve, after routing their opponents, thus carrying the war for the first time on to Russian soil.





WHERE A RUSSIAN LANDING WAS FOILED

On November 30, 1939, the day on which Russia invaded Finland, the Russians attempted a landing at Hangö, and the fortress there was bombarded by Soviet warships. The Russians were unable to effect a landing, and the 8,500-ton cruiser "Kirov" (top), of the Soviet Baltic Fleet, was severely damaged. In the lower picture are some of the garrison of one of the Finnish coast fortifications which took part in the action.

Photos, Planet News; Sport & General

Finland's 'Waist'

On the Kuhmo front, 50 miles north of Lieksa, no important engagements were reported on either side. But it was on Suomussalmi, one of the most desolate regions, with only three inhabitants to the square mile, that the eyes of Finland's sympathizers were directed in the early weeks of the war. It was here, too, where Finland's "waist-line"—the 140-mile-wide stretch of territory between the Gulf of Bothnia and the Russian frontier—seemed to render her particularly vulnerable to attack, that the Red Army suffered its first big reverse. If Russia had been able to drive across the "waist-line" she would have cut the country in two, separating Finland's northern and southern armies.

On December 3 the Russians were reported to be advancing against Suomussalmi from their railhead at Uhtua. Seemingly, they made good progress, the Finns admitting on December 10 that the enemy had advanced 18 miles, but again the Russians were blundering into a trap. Disaster overtook them at Lake Kianta, on which Suomussalmi is situated. This lake has two northern arms, and the Russians advanced confidently until they reached the westernmost. But the territory here forms a natural trap, which some 15,000 Russian troops entered early in December. The elusive Finns worked round to their rear, cut their supplies and waited for the Russians to freeze in the intense cold. Day after day the Russians halted, daring neither to move nor to light fires which would have attracted Finnish snipers, and hoping for reinforcements to come from Russia. But Finnish patrols had also raided the Murmansk-Leningrad railway and cut the branch railway from Uhtua at several points. The Russians' powers of resistance sank lower and lower. The cold froze their feet and finger-tips, so that they could hardly walk or sight a gun.

For ten days an occasional shot in the frozen Arctic forest was the only sound to break the silence around the trapped division; then the Finns attacked. The invaders put up a stout resistance for three days, but on the fourth all was over. Thousands of Russians were killed, and of the survivors many were unable to stand. Scenes outstanding even among the horrors of modern warfare were witnessed after the battle. Newly fallen snow cast a mantle over the recumbent forms of thousands of Russian dead. Frozen limbs projected like dead branches above the snow; trees were pitted with machine-gun bullets, while in thickets around were found the machine-gun nests of the Russians, the crews dead at their stations.

The Finns claimed that the 163rd Russian Division of 18,000 men had been virtually destroyed. Twenty-seven guns, 11 tanks, 150 lorries and 500 other vehicles, besides much ammunition, were captured. But Finnish losses also are believed to have been heavy. If not decisive, the Finnish success removed, temporarily at least, the threat to Finland's waist-line. Suomussalmi was abandoned by the Russians in their flight—so hastily that the body of a wounded Russian soldier was found frozen on the operating-table in a building adapted as a hospital. The victory of Suomussalmi was completed when, early in January, 1940 (as related in a subsequent Chapter), the Finns routed and destroyed the Russian division (44th) in reserve on this sector.

The Salla Battles

The second Russian threat to Finland's "waist-line" was at Salla. Russian columns began pouring towards Kemijärvi, the most easterly point of the railroad from Tornio, on the Swedish frontier, early in December. The Finns made stout counter-attacks, but the Russians employed Finnish Communist troops on this front, who were just as skilful fighters as the defenders themselves. Salla was captured by the Russians on December 12, but the Finns claimed the recapture of the village two days later. The fighting was most bitter, the Finns using daggers for close work in the dark woods. At the end of the year no decisive action had been fought on this front; but the activities of Finnish patrols, who had interrupted the Russian communications by daring raids on skis behind the Russian lines—notably at Uhtua, where they destroyed several Russian 'planes

CAPTIVES OF ILL-FATED 163rd DIVISION

In the fierce fighting around Suomussalmi, at the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940, the Finns destroyed two Russian divisions. Below is part of a column of Russian prisoners from the 163rd Division, captured near Pelkosenniemi, and here seen marching into a Finnish camp. Later the reserve Russian division in this sector was routed also.

Photo, Wide World

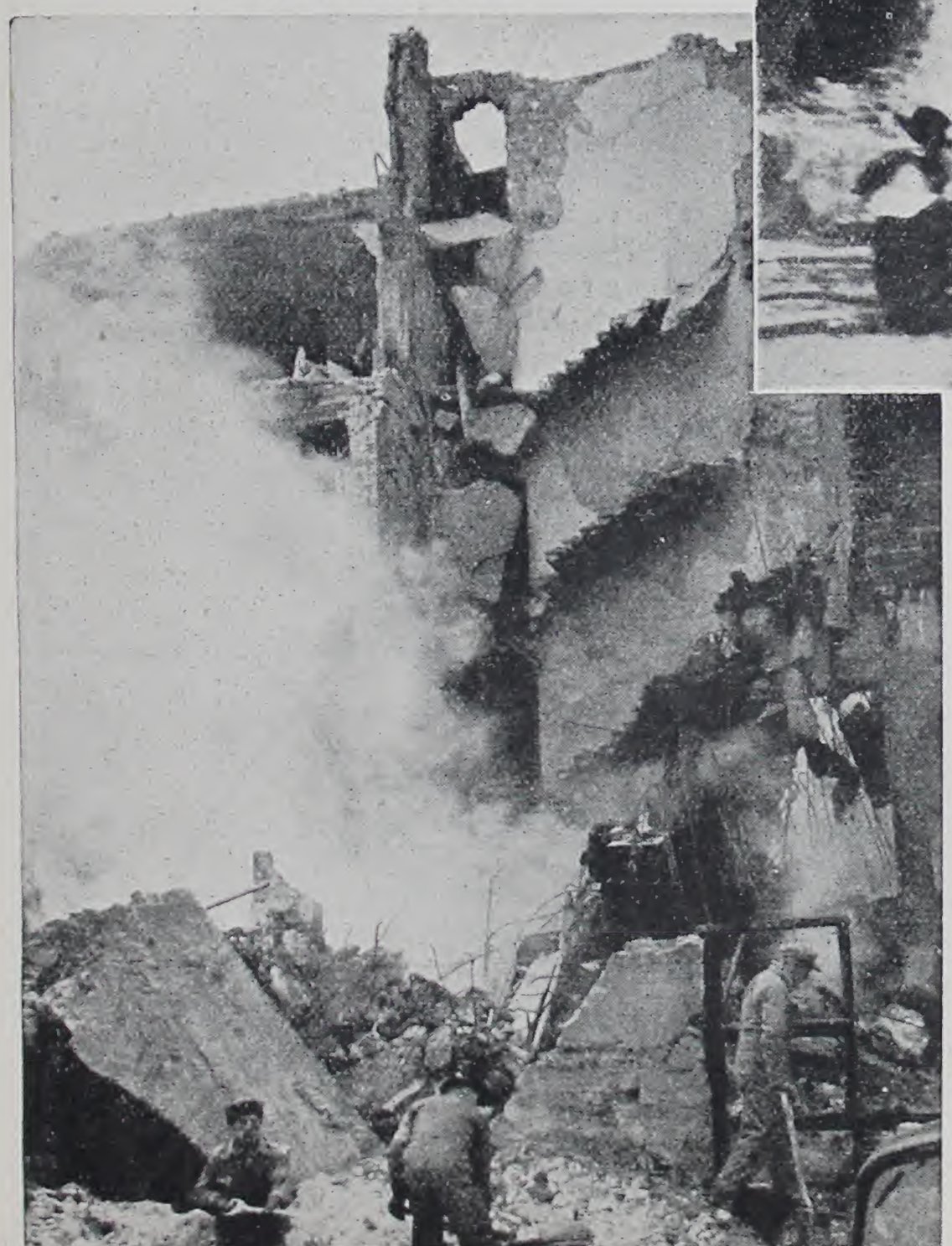


AIR RAID DAMAGE IN THE FINNISH CAPITAL

Helsinki was within easy range of Soviet bombers and inevitably became an important objective of the war. Above, inhabitants in Helsinki sheltering against a high wall during a raid on the city. Below, left, a block of flats in Helsinki split by a bomb. A demolition squad is clearing the ruins. On the right, the blazing remains of a motor-bus after the raiders had passed. Below, right, a church in Helsinki wrecked by Soviet bombs.

Photos, Associated Press; Wide World; Nordisk Press; Central Press







Planet News

CONDOTTIERE OF THE SNOWS

General Wallenius, seen above during a tour of inspection of the Salla sector, was appointed to the command of the Finnish armies operating in the north. Author, journalist, ex-conspirator, soldier, former Chief of the General Staff, Martti Wallenius is the hero of a hundred exploits. Like Mannerheim, he fought against the Reds in the Civil War of 1918.

by means of hand grenades—promised difficulties for the invaders similar to those they had encountered farther south at Suomussalmi and Suojärvi.

Of the eight thrusts made by Russia on land against Finland the only sector on which she could claim a success, however temporary and precarious, was on the most northerly front in the Petsamo area. The Russian objective was the complete possession of the Rybachi peninsula, through which the Russo-Finnish frontier ran. The fighting here would have formed a subject for any painter of battle scenes—the Arctic darkness lit up by the lurid glow of burning buildings, the trek to the Norwegian frontier of terror-stricken Lapps with their belongings, the dramatic attacks on the invaders by Finnish ski-soldiers.

Russian submarines co-operated in the attack on Liinahamari, the small outlying port of Petsamo. The Finns, hidden along the rocky shores of Petsamo bay, picked off the Russians in hundreds as they landed. The Soviet troops attacked on the Rybachi Peninsula on the first day of the war. Bitter fighting went on for several days, and the Finns claimed to have killed 1,000 Russians when the dynamited cliffs of Petsamo Bay showered masses of rock on the invaders in boats below. On land, the scanty scrub of the Arctic afforded the Russians little cover. In spite of their losses, the Russians hurled column after column at the Finns, who after several counter-attacks were forced to give ground. The war brought devastation to the inhabitants: ten thousand of them were collected, with only canvas as a cover, waiting to get to Norway. Families were split up; many were killed or frozen to death. One mother with several children travelled a hundred miles in ten days in blinding snow; five children died before she reached safety. Another mother lost her only child in a snowdrift.

The largest Russian attack came in the middle of December. The retreating Finns burned everything which could be of use to the invaders. The township of Salmijärvi, 30 miles from the mouth of the Petsamo River, was razed to the ground, and the British-owned nickel mines at Kolosjoki were blown up.

Greatest Attack Held Up

Towards the end of December the Finns were holding a line some 60 miles south of Petsamo, and the Russians were apparently held up by lack of supplies. Support from bombing 'planes and from warships anchored near Petsamo contributed largely to the Russian advance on this front, but the danger of a further advance along the Great Arctic Highway—Finland's motor road from Petsamo to Tornio, at the head of the Gulf of Bothnia—seemed to recede with the approach of the Arctic winter in all its severity.

Frequent bombing of Finland's roads and communications was a feature of Soviet tactics, and civilians suffered; news from reliable sources was scanty at the time, but from later investigation it appeared that civilian casualties had been surprisingly small (*see* Chapter 143,

page 1509). The two worst raids of this early period were on the opening day of hostilities (when some civilians were killed in Helsinki) and on Christmas Day, when Helsinki, Sortavala, Turku and Hangö were among the places raided. The Russians did not have it all their own way in the air, however, and during this period the Finnish Higher Command claimed the destruction of 23 enemy machines; a fair estimate is that the Russians lost at least 100 aircraft during the first month of the war. Some observers placed the Russian losses at 200 aircraft, 212 tanks, and 100,000 killed and wounded in this period. The Finnish Air Force repeatedly bombed the Russian forces and their communications, outstanding operations being several raids on the Leningrad-Murmansk railway.

Russian naval operations were confined to the capture of five undefended islands in the Gulf of Finland, among them Suursaari, and to bombardments of the Finnish coast and especially of the Koivisto coastal batteries.

At the end of the year the Finns, under the Premiership of Dr. Risto Ryti, who on the second day of the war formed a new Government consisting to a large extent of financial experts, were confident. Foreign supplies were reaching them in satisfactory quantities, and if these were maintained they hoped to defend themselves successfully in the future. Finland's case was ably stated at Geneva, when she appealed to the League of Nations for help (*see* Historic Documents, No. 77), and her country was just as ably defended by her soldiers.

As to the causes of the Finns' astonishing success against their mighty neighbour the natural difficulties of forest and marsh, intensely cold weather, and lack of communications no doubt played a major rôle. The Finns proved themselves born fighters, versed in the art of camouflage; they were good marksmen and, owing to their skill on skis, possessed much greater mobility than the Russians. The Russian army, on the other hand, showed certain deficiencies in equipment and organization. Outstanding defects seemed to be insufficient or unsuitable clothing for an Arctic campaign, and the launching of mass attacks which gave good targets to the Finns.

"The Russians are like a herd of reindeer," said one Finnish soldier. "We shoot and shoot until our ammunition is gone, but still more of them advance over the dead bodies of their comrades." The Russians showed the customary bravery of their race, but seemed ignorant of the art of forest warfare.

As suggested above, the success of the Finnish arms was largely due to the daring ski patrols, which penetrated for scores of miles into Russian territory and disorganized the only route on which the Russians could rely for supplies—the Leningrad-Murmansk railway. This view was expressed by General Wallenius, commander of the Finnish Northern Armies, who stated the Finnish problem as follows:

"This war is a problem of mathematics. We have to guess where the Russians will try to break through, and have troops in sufficient quantity at those places. . . . . We replace numbers by intelligence. Our soldiers are individual fighters. The Russians can never overcome the herd instinct."

But it should be pointed out that this was the first real campaign to be fought by the modern Russian armies, and it was too early yet to perceive the basic strategy of the Soviet High Command.

ONE OF MANY DISABLED RUSSIAN TANKS

The Soviet Army suffered vast losses in tanks and other mechanized equipment during their attacks upon the Mannerheim Line. Finnish soldiers are here seen examining a Russian light tank which has been put out of action, apparently by the Finns' favourite method of thrusting logs into the machinery.

Photo, Planet News







MAINTAINING ESSENTIAL HOME FOOD SUPPLIES

In this page are seen various aspects of the maintenance of Britain's food supply in wartime. Above, Mr. W. S. Morrison, Minister for Food, watches the unloading of a cargo of meat at a British port. On the right sugar beet is being taken off the lorries at a Yorkshire factory. Below, fishermen, carrying on as usual despite the menace of German mines and bombers, are hauling in nets.

Photos, Central Press ; Fox ; Keystone



Chapter 42

ENSURING BRITAIN'S FOOD SUPPLIES: CONTROL AND RATIONING OF COMMODITIES

Pre-War Precautions—Gigantic Task of the Food Ministry—The Pooling and Bulk Buying of Foodstuffs—Rationing of Butter and Bacon—The Position with Regard to Sugar—Britain's Increased Output of Beet Sugar—The Control and Rationing of Meat—Why Rationing of Foodstuffs was Necessary: The Minister's Explanation

ONE of the greatest errors of the war of 1914–1918 was the omission to set up a national system of food control until the struggle had half run its course. For two years and more, supply and demand were allowed to regulate the prices of the essentials of the people's life, with the result that retail food prices rose about sixty per cent, food queues were a common sight in the cities and towns, on every hand there were signs of the most shocking mismanagement and waste, and from every quarter came complaints of hoarding and shortage and unfairness in distribution. At last when the nation's patience was exhausted and the whole economic machinery of the country was creaking and cracking under the strain, a Ministry of Food was established which eventually, under the wise direction of Lord Rhondda, brought order out of chaos and made need give way to, not plenty indeed, but a comfortable sufficiency.

No such mistaken delay was seen in 1939. Months before the war began the Food (Defence) Plans Department of the Board of Trade, under Mr. W. S. Morrison, M.P., had prepared the way for a fully-fledged Ministry. Large stocks of some of the most valuable but more perishable foodstuffs—wheat and sugar, for instance—were accumulated. Arrangements were made for taking over the purchase of foodstuffs from abroad and controlling the whole system of marketing and distribution, and the foundations were laid of a rationing system which should ensure that the available stocks were distributed in the fairest and most effective way. Furthermore, production was stimulated, and farmers and smallholders and the great army of amateur gardeners were exhorted and encouraged to grow more food.

A Year's Stocks

The Food Ministry was born on September 8, 1939, and the Minister, Mr. Morrison, at once set in motion the machinery which had been elaborated for the emergency. No new army of officials was created or was even contemplated to deal with food at the docks or markets or other centres. "The intention," said Mr. Morrison, "is that the task of food distribution shall remain in the hands of traders, men who know it from A to Z, and who merely become agents of the Government—which is another way of saying 'the agents of the public.'" Private trade in foodstuffs obtained from abroad was terminated, and the Ministry became almost overnight the biggest buying organization in the world, as might be expected from the fact that it was now charged with the feeding of 46,500,000 people. Prices of the most important foodstuffs were controlled, and in September the first of a series of lists was issued, fixing the maximum retail prices of butter, eggs, condensed milk, flour, sugar, canned salmon, potatoes, and dried fruits. In this way rises which had occurred in some overseas markets were prevented from having their repercussions at home.

As part of the Government's policy of preparedness for enemy air raids on a large scale, the metropolitan markets of Smithfield and Billingsgate were decentralized. After a few weeks, however, the latter was restored to its old home in London, so widespread was the confusion, so many the complaints at the delays and inadequate accommodation, that arose when instead of one great centre where middleman could deal with retailer direct there were a large number of much smaller centres established in outlying regions.

This was the first of the Ministry's errors of commission—one which, be it admitted, was soon rectified when public opinion expressed itself loudly and forthrightly. There was another error, however, which could not be so readily disowned—what came to be known by the name of Pooling.

Whether it was because of the simplicity of operation or because of the cheapness that might be expected to result, the Ministry planned to "pool"—in other words, mix—the available stocks of some of the most vital foodstuffs, i.e. tea, margarine, butter, dried fruits, and meat paste.

From the outbreak of war the main overseas purchases were controlled by the Ministry; competitive bidding was eliminated, and the Ministry bought in bulk all the available supplies. This gave, so it was claimed, the best possible assurance for the essential supplies from overseas at the lowest possible price. Pooling in purchasing, then, would seem to be fully justified.

Nor could there be much objection, in principle at least, to pooling in distribution. Indeed, this was declared by the Ministry to be an essential preliminary to the rationing scheme which was announced to come into force sooner or later. Rationing necessitated fixing the quantities which a consumer might buy, and ensuring that he actually received them. Thus, it was urged, the Ministry must control supply through all its stages, and this in effect was what it did.

Pool System

But pooling in quality was on a different plane. Admitted that in wartime a blending or manufacturing firm may come to be deprived of the full range of grades of the raw materials required for a particular variety of article, or it may be impossible to frame a list of maximum prices without reducing the number of varieties on sale. But when it was announced that not only margarine but tea was to be "pooled," there was a tremendous outcry.

Only for a brief space, in fact, was a standardized brand of "marge" seen in the shops—it was alleged to contain vitamins A and D to bring it up to the vitamin value of butter, and retailed at a standard price of 6d. per lb.—and then the brands of the various manufacturers were again on sale. As for tea, no standard variety was issued. Nevertheless, the Ministry did good work in requisitioning all the existing stocks of tea, in taking over the control of all fresh arrivals, and in marketing the tea in Britain. As a result, tea prices went up somewhat.

Of the other commodities included in the pooling plans, there was no blending or mixing of butters, although all butters were made subject to the same maximum retail price. Grades of dried fruits were actually pooled and mixed, to secure fair distribution following the shortage of supplies in September. As

soon as bulk stocks arrived, maximum wholesale and retail prices were fixed, and the situation eased.

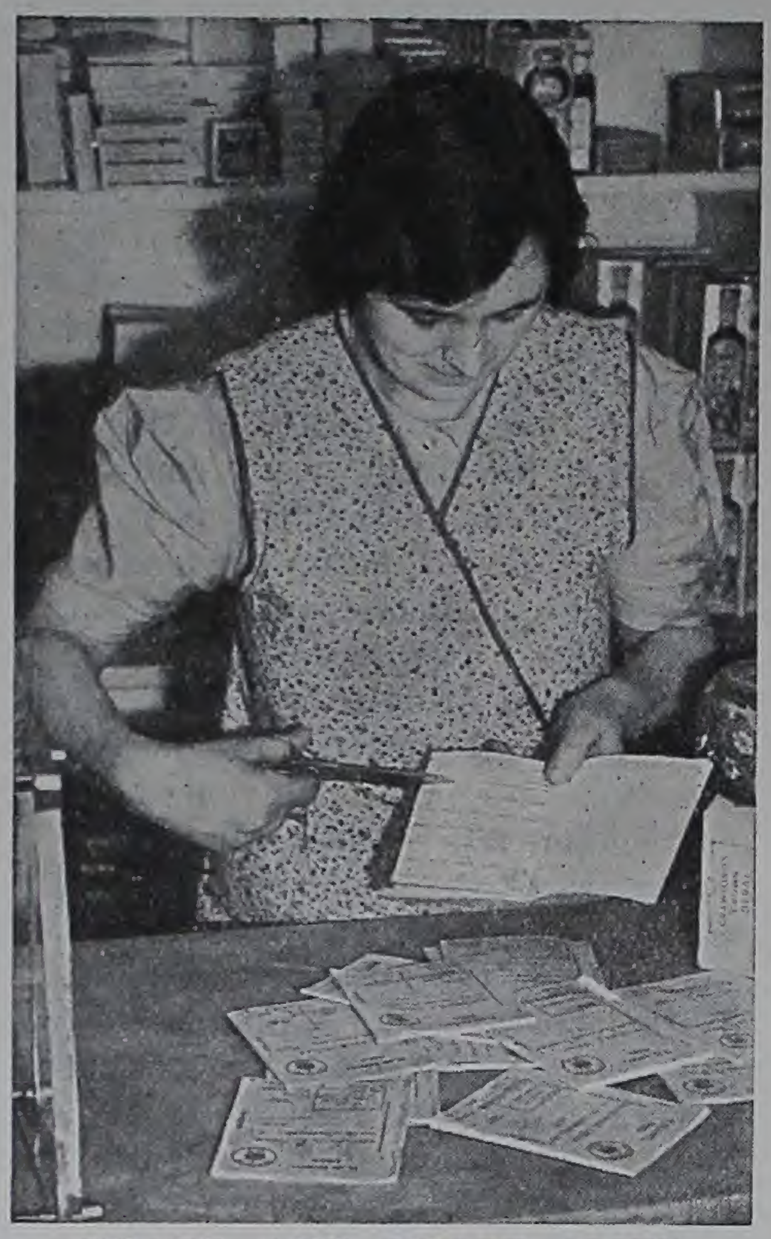
On November 1 Mr. Morrison announced that the first foods to be rationed would be bacon (which included ham) and butter. For the first few weeks of the war bacon supplies were short. Although the pig population of the country stood at 3,763,000 as against 1,825,000 in 1918, home-cured bacon met only one-fifth of the country's normal needs. The remaining four-fifths had come from overseas, principally from Denmark, Eire, Canada, and the Baltic countries. For a few days following the outbreak of war shipments from Denmark, representing 35 per cent of the imports, were entirely suspended, and although they were resumed after a period of uncertainty, it was obvious that the activities of the Nazi submarines and minelayers might at any time result in a fresh suspension. Supplies from the Baltic countries ceased, of course, but there was little doubt that the flow of bacon from Canada and Eire would be maintained.

Bacon Problems

Apart from the reduction in supplies, the distribution of bacon within the country raised difficulties which again pointed towards a system of Government control and eventual rationing. Distributors accustomed to handling Danish bacon found their supplies cut off for a short time, while those handling Irish or Canadian bacon sometimes found themselves handling exceptionally large quantities owing to the fact that ships in wartime arrived irregularly, and might be diverted to ports other than their customary ports of call; on account of the need for secrecy, it might be impossible to give advance information of their arrival.

Acting through BINDAL (Bacon Importers National Defence Association Ltd.) and normal trade channels with committees fully representative of the trade, the Government, with a view to the equitable distribution of the available supplies, divided the country into areas to which stocks were allocated as nearly as possible in strict proportion to their requirements. The evacuation of London and some of the provincial cities greatly increased the difficulties attending the scheme, and there was criticism of the "datum period" for bacon supplies, which was believed to be the four weeks ended August 19, when large numbers of people were away from their homes on holiday. Hence, in the event, holiday resorts found themselves with a large surplus of bacon, while the cities to which the holiday-makers had returned were correspondingly deficient. The same criticism was advanced in connexion with butter, the datum period for which was June 5 to July 29, 1939—also a holiday period.

Owing to the temporary cessation or restriction of imported supplies the country became specially dependent on home-cured and Irish bacon. As a result, those traders normally handling home-produced bacon—and their customers—tended to be in a better position than those who depended on imported bacon. To remedy this apparent unfairness the Ministry of Food took powers



SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE

The food rationing scheme came into operation on January 8, 1940, beginning with sugar, bacon and butter. This London shopkeeper is detaching coupons from the ration books of customers registered with her for their supplies.

Photo, Fox

to requisition a proportion of the output of English curing factories: sometimes the proportion requisitioned was as high as 50 per cent of the total output. The bacon taken over in this way was then distributed through the channels usually handling imported supplies.

The bacon trade did its best to assist the Ministry of Food, but it was soon recognized that something more than distribution facilities and price control would be required, in the public interest. Rationing was indicated.

Butter was in a similar case. In peacetime Britain was consuming nearly the whole of the world's exportable surplus of butter, and hence it was next to impossible for the Ministry to accumulate a stock in readiness for the expected emergency. If butter had been taken from the market for storage there would have been a corresponding reduction of stocks available, which would have caused a rise in price. While certain butters can be kept quite well over long periods in cold storage, the latter is expensive; and, besides, the cold storage at the Ministry's disposal was limited. It was stated that the largest quantity of butter which could have been withdrawn from the market for cold storage was about 20,000 tons a year, and this would have sufficed to add only 4 oz. of butter per week to an individual ration for a period of four weeks. To make good the anticipated deficiency in the wartime supplies of butter, resort was had to margarine.

The Government set itself the threefold task of making certain that ample stocks of the raw materials for margarine production were brought into the country, that the margarine factories should be enabled greatly to increase their production, and that there should be no undue increase in the retail price of "marge." Unlike butter, the raw materials for margarine manufacture could be brought in large quantities for storage without disturbing the peacetime markets, and, moreover, it could be stored inexpensively. A big reserve was therefore secured before the war began, and further contracts for supplies of the necessary oil seeds were entered into in due course. As to the manufacture of the finished article, the Ministry arranged in consultation with the margarine manufacturers that they should concentrate on the production of one standard blend at a standard price. By the middle of November the enlarged stocks of raw materials and the increased production of the factories enabled the Ministry to free the industry and to allow the manufacturers to resume the production of proprietary brands. Nevertheless, it was admitted that the control established at the outbreak of war had been absolutely necessary in order to allow production to be increased on a scale sufficient to meet all potential needs, and to prevent any rise in the price.

Margarine 'Unpooled'

Butter and bacon, then, were the two foodstuffs chosen for the first stage of rationing, and from what has been said above it will be realized that the Ministry had little difficulty in justifying the step. Announcing the Government's intentions in the House of Commons on November 1, Mr. Morrison said that in the case of these two commodities it was not proposed to begin rationing

before the middle of December. The actual date would be announced later, and during the interval each consumer would be asked to register with a retailer of his or her choice.

"Both butter and bacon," he went on, "are perishable. Neither commodity was suitable for storage, and consequently no Government reserve of either existed on the outbreak of hostilities. Later, we expect supplies to increase, but for the present imports from European sources have been reduced, and there has not been sufficient time to fill the gap from more distant sources of supply. Provided that imports continue at the present rate, as there is good reason for assuming that they will, the ration for both bacon and butter will be 4 oz. per week for every individual consumer, i.e. 1 lb. of bacon and 1 lb. of butter for a family of four persons."

The Minister next dealt with the question of sugar. Supplies were at present adequate, he said—a few weeks earlier the Ministry of Food had made arrangements for the purchase of one year's requirements—and the Government did not desire to impose the rationing of sugar for the present. If each consumer restricted purchase to 1 lb. per head per week, he went on, there would be sufficient for some months without the need for rationing. At the same time, the Government would ask each consumer to register for sugar with a retailer, although it would not be necessary to use the coupons in the ration books which were being prepared.

On the whole the Government's proposals were received philosophically enough. Most people would not have been surprised if rationing had been introduced in the first few days of the war, and now the day was postponed to the middle of December.

Rationing At Last

Satisfaction increased when on the morrow of Mr. Morrison's speech it was learned that the introduction of the rationing scheme might be still further postponed until Christmas or more probably January 1 owing, in the case of butter, to the shipments which, as in normal years, were arriving from New Zealand, Australia, and the Argentine, and which would reach their peak just before Christmas.

The postponement did not meet with universal approval, however, and the case of the critics was presented in the House of Commons on November 8, when Mr. A. V. Alexander, the principal spokesman of the Co-operative movement, moved that "the measures with respect to food supply should be more energetically directed towards arresting the continuous rise in prices and ensuring that the day-to-day requirements of all sections of the community shall be fairly met through the immediate application of a comprehensive rationing scheme." Mr. Alexander's argument was that rationing of bacon and butter would not begin until the middle of December at the earliest, and would then provide only 4 oz. a head of butter a week and a similar amount of bacon or ham. In his opinion rationing should be introduced at once, as (he declared) from every side there were complaints of a shortage of bacon and butter as well as other commodities. There was no reason why rationing should not be instituted next week; they did not beg it, they demanded it.

Mr. Morrison in his reply said that if he saw a severe scarcity of meat or any other commodity in sight he would certainly recommend that the House should agree to its rationing, but they did not want to see the matter treated as a doctrine—as though rationing were good for its own sake. While he recognized the virtues of rationing (he went on) he also saw the drawbacks from the ordinary consumer's point of view. Rationing was bound to be worked out on a mathematical calculation of the total supply divided by the number of the population. But the flat average which resulted from such a calculation did not conform to the reality. Everyone did not eat the same kind of food, nor the same quantities of it. Therefore, he believed that they should leave to the consumer the utmost amount of freedom possible. While proceeding with preparations for rationing, he thought that they should do so with prudence, and not ask people to undergo the inconvenience of rationing unless there was such a shortage of a commodity as to interfere with equitable distribution.

Days and weeks passed, and still no definite date for the commencement of the rationing scheme was announced, although the work of registration with the retailers proceeded smoothly. Then on November 29 came the clear announcement by Mr. Morrison in the House of Commons that the rationing scheme for bacon and butter would be introduced on January 8, 1940, when the ration for both commodities would be, as previously stated, 4 oz. per week for every individual consumer.



Photo, Barratt

A BLOOMSBURY MARKET GARDEN

"Grow More Food" was a war slogan that was put into effect by professional and amateur gardeners alike. Allotments quickly came into existence in parks and public gardens, and here we see part of Tavistock Square, London, with cabbages replacing the grass.

As things turned out, sugar also was rationed from January 8, and the allowance was fixed at 12 oz. a week for each person. This was announced by the Ministry of Food on December 28, when it was also stated that meat would be rationed at a date to be announced later, although consumers were asked to register for meat supplies with their retailer not later than January 8.

There was some surprise that the amount of the sugar ration was to be 12 oz. a week for each person, considerably less than the 1 lb. a week to which the public had been asked to limit their consumption. "The people of this country," said Mr. Morrison in an accompanying statement issued by the Ministry on December 28, "are among the highest consumers of sugar in the world. Rationing will still leave us high in the list. In Germany the ration is $8\frac{1}{4}$ oz. a week, but jam also is rationed at $3\frac{1}{2}$ oz. for adults and $5\frac{1}{4}$ oz. for children. Here children and adults alike will get a full allowance of all the rationed foods. Sugar is an important and convenient source of energy, but the same energy is available in alternative foods, especially in potatoes and other vegetables which provide valuable protective elements as well."

Sugar Allowance

Appropriate allowances of sugar for confectionery manufacturers, beekeepers, brewers, and in other special cases were announced, and special arrangements were made for domestic marmalade-makers. It was also made known that the Government was endeavouring to stimulate the home production of beet sugar; the estimate of the home crop for 1939 was 475,000 tons as compared with 289,000 tons for the previous year.

Turning to the question of meat, Mr. Morrison said that from January 15 the Ministry of Food would buy not only all the imported meat but all livestock offered by farmers for slaughter, and would control the distribution of all meat supplies both home-produced and imported. As the ration would be based on value, its weight would vary with the consumer's choice of quality. The "edible offals"—tripe, liver, hearts, kidneys, tongues, sweetbreads, and oxtails—would not be rationed, nor would the manufactured products—sausages, brawn, meat pies, galantines, and meat pastes.

Speaking generally, the Minister declared that "the rationing scheme gives ordinary citizens a chance of joining in the good work being done by the Navy and the mercantile marine. It enables them to unite in a national effort to reduce the claims and strains on our shipping, both naval and merchant, and it permits a greater dedication of our shipping to the purposes of war, the transport of men and munitions, of essential raw materials, and of goods whose export brings in foreign exchange. The scheme will help to make our war effort more efficient. It will release both foreign exchange and shipping space for the importation of armaments and raw materials. The rationed foods will be distributed with absolute fairness, and, while superfluous consumption and consequently importation will be eliminated, the people will be fed adequately and the quantities of food available will be well up to the requirements of health and efficiency."



CANNED BEEF FOR OLD ENGLAND

While, in the event, Allied control of the seas made possible the importation of adequate supplies of fresh meat, large stocks of canned meat were bought from the U.S.A. as a reserve in case of need. Above is part of a consignment ready to be shipped from Staten Island.

Photo, Keystone

So the rationing scheme was put into operation. Eight classes of ration books were envisaged, viz.: General, for adults and children over six; Child's, for those under six; Traveller's, for use by commercial travellers, theatrical artists, lorry drivers, etc.; Adolescent's Supplementary, in respect of boys aged from 13 to 18—not girls, be it noted—containing an extra page of meat coupons; Heavy Worker's Supplementary, also with an extra page of meat coupons, but representing a larger ration in addition; Weekly Seaman's, for seamen on weekly engagements who had meals at different ports; Emergency, for use by persons temporarily away from their homes; and, finally, cards for use by soldiers, sailors, and airmen on leave. In the event, however, the Adolescent's Supplementary and Heavy Worker's Supplementary cards were not issued.

Each class of ration book was of a distinctive colour, but every book contained pages of coupons for the five foods which it was thought might be included in the rationing scheme—meat, bacon and ham, butter and margarine, cooking fats, and sugar. Pages of spare coupons were also included to serve for foods which might be rationed later. As mentioned above, the only foods rationed at the outset were bacon (including ham) and butter (which did *not* include margarine), and, some weeks later, meat.

Registering Consumers

On receiving the book the consumer was required to register with a shop or shops for the rationed foods, and the retailer then detached a counterfoil from the book which became his warrant for applying to the local Food Officer to buy the necessary supplies. He was not permitted to buy more than the total amounts for which his permit was issued. Then at the time of purchase the retailer detached from the book a coupon representing the amount of butter or bacon or meat supplied, or, by arrangement with his customer, he detached the complete page for convenience.

No doubt it was in a measure because so many people remembered the satisfactory working of the rationing scheme in the First Great War that the scheme that began on January 8, 1940, had a smooth, almost uncriticized inception. But, more still, it was because it was recognized as a necessary war measure. "I leave you with this conclusion," said Mr. Morrison at the end of his broadcast to the nation on January 6; "we will not ask our menfolk at sea to bring us more food than we need. Let them bring instead of that surplus more and more of all that will increase our protection and their strength. And, until we have won the victory, we at home will share out what our men bring us as they share the dangers of their service."



AFTER A RUSSIAN AIR RAID ON HELSINKI

Helsinki is less than 200 miles from Leningrad by air, across the Gulf of Finland, and is very vulnerable to attack. As an important seaport and the Finnish capital, it was exposed to frequent bombing. This block of flats was destroyed in one of the first raids soon after the outbreak of hostilities.

Photo, Central Press



Centre Street, Helsinki, looking towards the Station. The Finnish capital is famed for its architecture.



The statue of Liberty, symbolizing the freedom regained by the Finns in 1918, at Vaasa.



The market place at Turku (Abo), the old capital of Finland. Taken before the Russian invasion, the three photographs reproduced above present a remarkable contrast to those of the same towns seen on the opposite page.

Photos, Press Topics; Lubinski



Relief Map specially drawn f





Citizens of Helsinki, carrying gas masks, watch rescue squads at work after an air raid.



Buildings in the residential quarter of Vaasa, set on fire by Russian incendiary bombs.



Finnish firemen attempting to deal with fires caused by a Russian air attack on Turku (Abo). The positions of the towns, the Mannerheim Line, and the battle zones referred to in Chapter 41, are shown on the accompanying relief map.

Photos, Wide World ; Planet News ; L.N.A.



FINLAND'S WHITE KNIGHTS OF LIBERTY

Guerilla actions by white-clad Finnish ski patrols proved demoralizing to the Russian battalions. The Finns harassed them unceasingly, gliding from point to point, a silent and invisible menace. Here are men of one of the famous ski patrols holding a provisional line on the Salla front, with snow-covered ditches as their only cover in front of woods of spruce.

Photo, Planet News

Chapter 43

THE WESTERN NEUTRALS: POSITION OF HOLLAND, BELGIUM, LUXEMBURG AND SPAIN

Neutrals did not Fear Allied Aggression—Strategic Importance of the Low Countries to Germany—Luxemburg a Centre of Espionage—Holland and Belgium Prepared to Defend their Independence against Germany—The Situation of Switzerland—Spain was Disillusioned by the Nazi-Soviet Pact

No more peacefully inclined and resolutely neutral countries existed than the small western neutrals and Spain. The last-named was differently situated in relation to the war, not only geographically but politically. On merely economic grounds all these countries were bound to suffer much even as neutrals, owing to the dislocation of international trade ; while Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland had to bear a ruinous charge on their limited resources for unavoidable special measures of defence, the most onerous of which were the various degrees of mobilization forced upon them by the recurring threat of a German invasion. After an interlude of quiet while Queen Wilhelmina and King Leopold put forward their plea for peace negotiations between the belligerents, there was a resumption of the threatening tone of German propaganda against Holland and Belgium and of the troop concentrations near their frontiers ; and before the end of the year they were hurriedly extending in concert their defence measures.

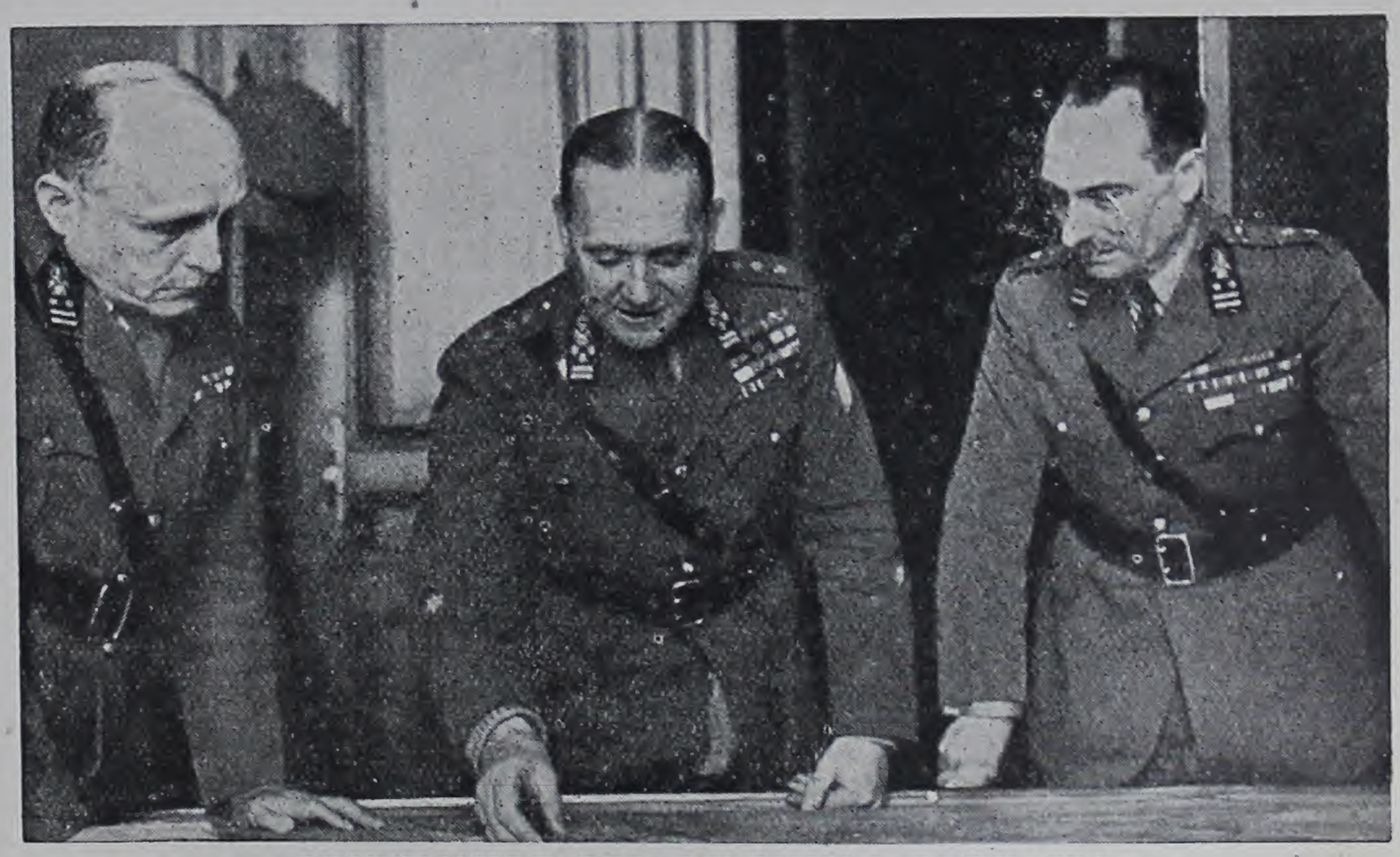
It was a remarkable indication of the world-wide recognition of the fact that Germany was the law-breaker and the Allies the upholders of international law, that nowhere among the small neutrals during those anxious months was there any fear of an Allied aggression against their frontiers. The costly preparations to defend their independence were entirely inspired by German actions and the black German record. In spite of the far-reaching agreement with Soviet Russia, and the possibility of certain supplies being added to the German stores of war essentials and food, it was increasingly realized, as the autumn passed into winter, that the compulsion to initiate a great offensive lay upon Germany and not upon the Allies, whose naval blockade was strangling her internal economy.

No Fear of Allies

In 1914 Germany's near achievement of a lightning victory had been frustrated mainly by the diversion in the East caused by the Russian armies : France was comparatively open to invasion then, and the Germans, by brutally smashing their way through Belgium, had made sure of bursting into French territory in the north and of occupying strategically important naval bases on the Belgian coast at Zeebrugge and Ostend. The importance of these bases then was mainly for the U-boat counter-blockade, but in 1939 the acquisition of coastal bases closer to England than the Friesian Islands had assumed a new importance, because they would include seaplane and bomber bases from which shipping and vital centres in Britain could be more conveniently attacked. This development of the air warfare, which began to rival, and indeed to exceed in importance, the U-boat campaign, was one of the features of the early months of the war of 1939 which distinguished the campaign from that of 1914. When the bad weather set in during November, 1939, postponing the prospects of a big land offensive, the naval war in the air, as it might be termed, soon enlarged its role in operations. Before Christmas the Nazi command had characteristically incurred further condemnation by extending hostilities to fishing trawlers, the crews of which were mercilessly machine-gunned when forced to take to their boats. (*See* Chapter 47 for an account of this aspect of the war.)

By the latter part of December, 1939, it was obvious that the main German air forces, which greatly exceeded as yet in quantity, if not in quality, the combined British and French, were being held in reserve ; and even without the other menacing signs of German concentrations on land it had become clear that in this war the Dutch coast would be the kind of strategic objective that the Germans were unlikely to deny themselves out of respect for international law. If they invaded Holland, they would probably invade Belgium at the same time, not merely as a further threat to the French defences, but to secure the coastal areas for their naval and air bases. And when this should occur the overrunning of the Duchy of Luxemburg, situated between eastern Belgium and the Maginot Line, was a foregone conclusion, for Luxemburg could offer no resistance. The other strategic "question-mark" was the possibility of a German invasion of Switzerland, probably from near Basle

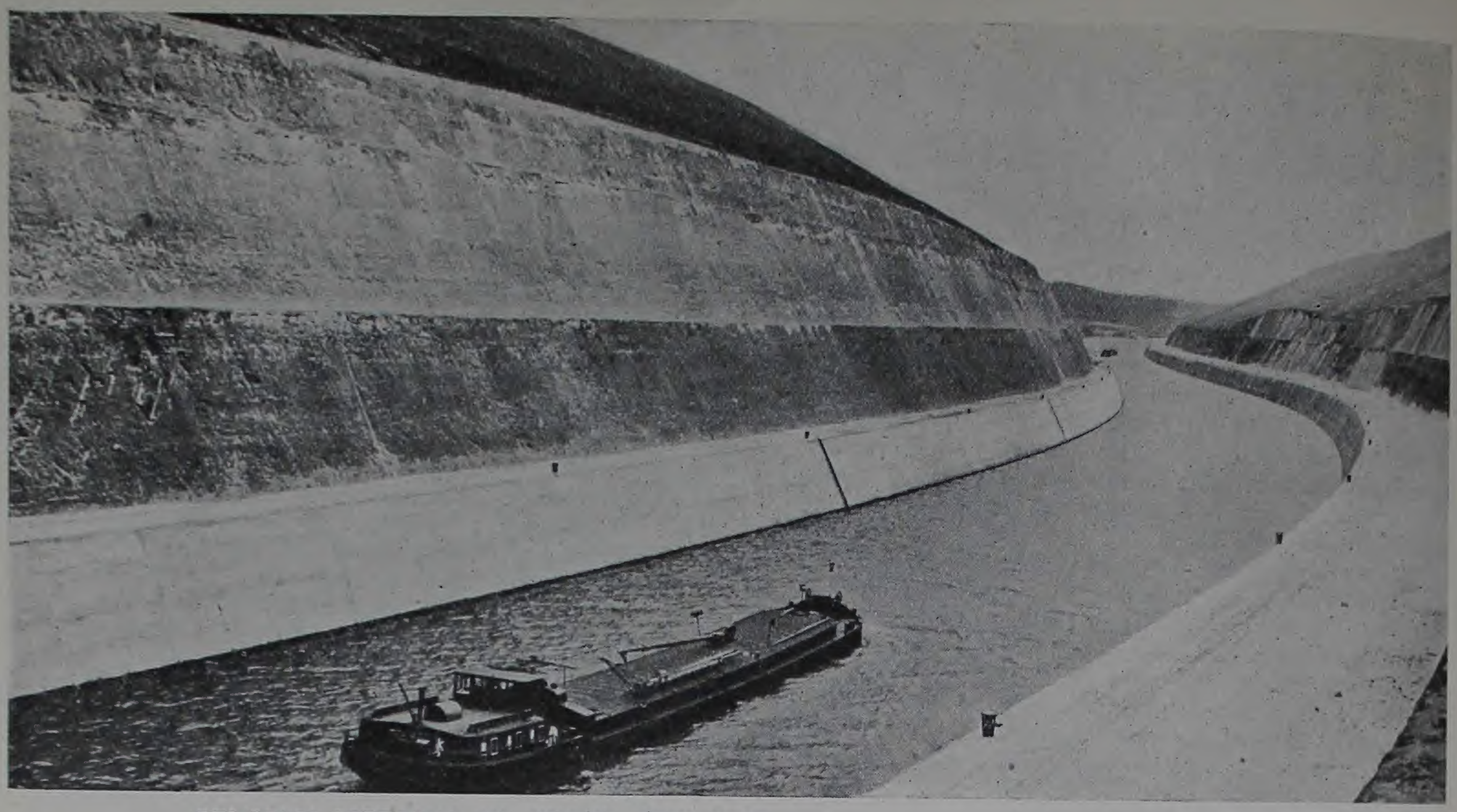
Dutch Coast as Air Base



RESPONSIBLE FOR BELGIUM'S DEFENCES

Above are three of the men who were responsible for the defence of Belgium at the time of the threatened German offensive in January, 1940 : Lt.-Gen. Van den Bergen, Chief of the General Staff (centre), with his deputies, Maj.-Gen. Van Troyen and Maj.-Gen. Derusseux. Lt.-Gen. Van den Bergen resigned on January 31, and was succeeded by Maj.-Gen. Michiels.

Photo, R. Capa



BELGIAN LIFE-LINE OF PEACE AND WAR

Completed in June, 1939, the Albert Canal running from Liége to Antwerp is of great strategical as well as economic importance. In many places, as in the Vroenhoven cutting seen above, between Haccourt and Vroenhoven, its sides rise up like giant cliffs, and it is strongly fortified.

Photo, Fox

to Besançon, as a means of outflanking the French Maginot Line.

The problem of Switzerland, however, was less closely bound up with that of her small fellow neutrals, and to get a clear picture of the situation it will be better first to consider the position of these latter countries.

Luxemburg, with an area of less than a thousand square miles, a population of about 300,000, and an "army" of 250 men, could be ignored as a barrier to aggression.

Luxemburg's Position

Its position and the fact that its mining industries (an extension of the German Saar) were comparatively important left no prospect of the Duchy remaining free from invasion when a large-scale land offensive should begin. A point of divergence from the campaign of 1914, however, was that a German invasion here would release a French advance from the Maginot Line along the southern frontier, in an attempt to hold up the German advance by a flank attack. The northern end of the Duchy, projecting into Belgium where the former German areas of Eupen and Malmédy were situated, was even less likely to be respected if the German forces invaded Belgium. But assuming that such an invasion would form part of a larger offensive, including the occupation of Dutch coastal areas, the military difficulties for the invaders might be considerable, faced as they were by strong French fortifications from which an Allied advance could safely be made. Therefore the German military had established a network of espionage



DANGEROUS CORNER

So great was the fear of a German invasion in January, 1940, that the Belgian Army was fully mobilized. This Belgian sentry is on duty on the frontier road to Aachen, in Germany.

Photo, Dorien-Leigh

during the autumn all over the Low Countries, with Luxemburg as the centre, and this was used in conjunction with unremitting propaganda against the Allies, which till December, 1939, at least influenced a good many Dutch citizens.

The main defensive measures of the Dutch Government consisted in preparations to flood certain areas at short notice, and these areas were in the path of a German invasion. Before the middle of November, 1939, by agreement with Belgium, Holland also had not only raised the water level of the flood areas in preparation, but had undertaken considerable mobilization of her armed forces. Her mobilized first-line forces numbered only 114,000, a total which could be raised to about 270,000 with the partly trained reserves. Her navy and air force were small. But the firmness of the Dutch Government was indicated by the proclamation of a "state of siege" in the areas vital to the main defence, which meant principally the fortified lines of the Maas and Ijssel rivers, and the two chief flood areas. One of these latter was the marsh and fenland west of the Maas, which could quickly be inundated by opening the canal sluices; twenty miles behind this was the Zuyder Water Line, a great semicircle. About twenty miles behind this again was the New Dutch Water Line, where (at great cost to this little country) far more serious flooding could be done, sufficient to form a formidable barrier which should delay invaders for precious days, and practically all the Dutch industrial area would remain behind it. The difficulty,

especially from a British point of view, was that these defences did not protect the greater portion of the coast suitable for naval and air bases in the north-east.

Nevertheless, while Dutch fears were certainly directed towards Germany, resentment was mainly against Britain, in spite of the fact that Holland had shared in the losses at sea due to Nazi mine-sowing. In December, 1939, the resentment against the Contraband Control became strong, for the holding up and occasional confiscation of cargoes by the Allies was a serious addition to the economic sufferings of Holland, in her role as the commercial carrier and agent for much of Western Europe. Both Amsterdam and Rotterdam were badly hit, and unemployment among Dutch sailors increased. That these sufferings and irritations did not influence Dutch policy against a complete understanding with Belgium for defence against aggression affords a measure of the country's sound sense of values.

For Belgium it was important to have concerted measures in readiness, since an invasion of parts of Holland (especially Limburg) would seriously affect Belgian defences, which necessarily depended more upon military fortifications and the army. This was the chief factor behind the visit of King Leopold to Queen Wilhelmina early in November, 1939, after their formal and unsuccessful joint peace representations to the belligerents in October. King Leopold had devoted himself to bringing his Flemish and Walloon subjects together in unity on questions of neutrality and national security, and there had been no division of opinion in Belgium in the autumn upon drastic emergency defence measures. Poignant memories of the last war had strengthened the Belgians' determination to preserve neutrality as long as possible, while leaving them no doubt as to the character of the potential enemy. Although, with injured trade and her own share of shipping losses, Belgium could ill afford great expenditure on further defensive measures, she set about strengthening her well-planned fortifications; these had been made on both French and German frontiers, as a gesture of neutrality, but henceforth were to be developed solely on the German side. Her population of slightly less than 9,000,000 was largely industrialized, and supported a relatively strong conscript army, although it totalled only about 88,000 without the reserves.

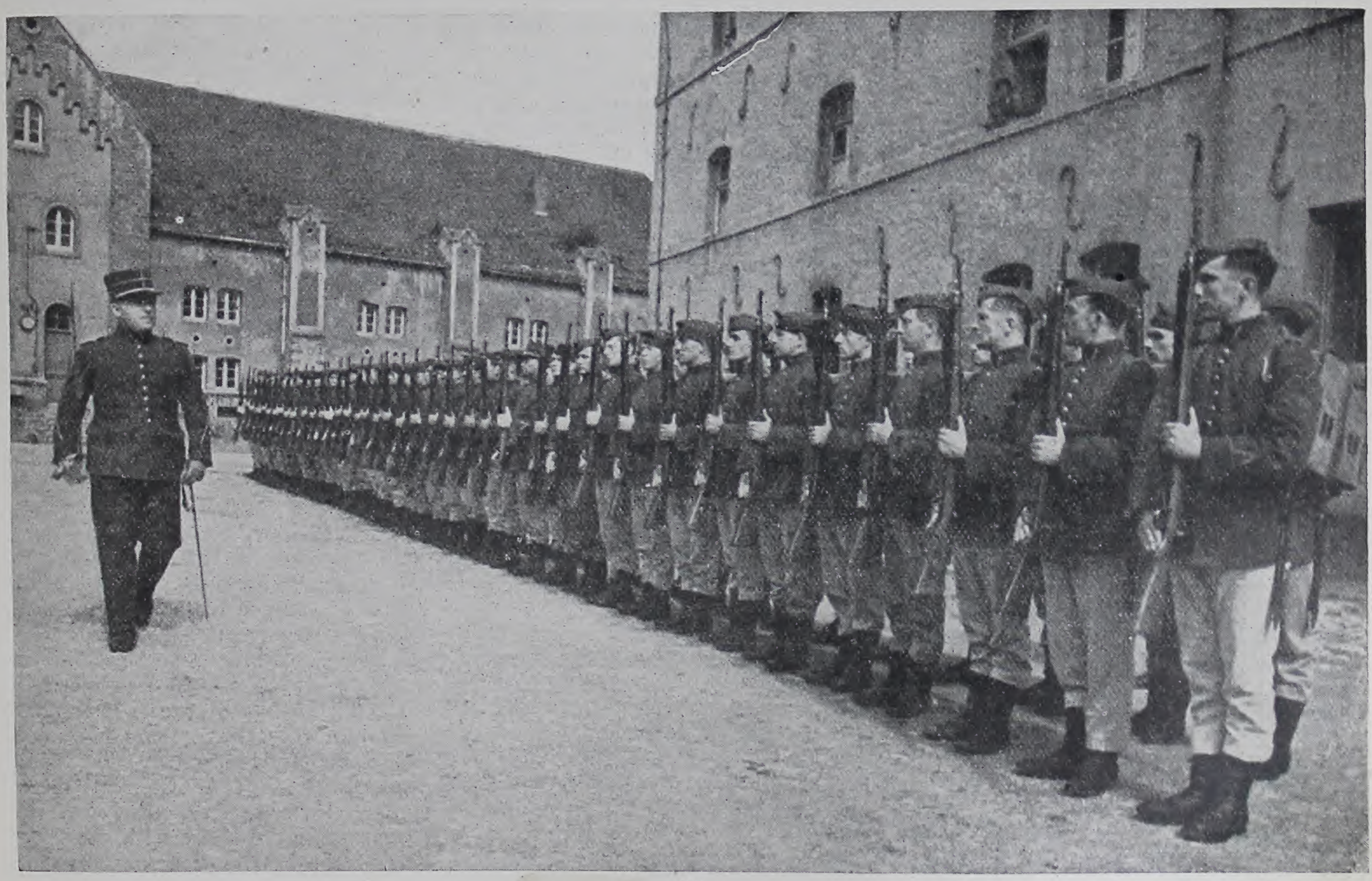
Belgium Prepares

By the first week of December Belgium had called 650,000 men to the colours, and throughout the previous month military detachments had been working unceasingly, day and night, in shifts through all weathers, completing a fortified line all the way from Antwerp to the south, where the frontier touched Luxemburg. The Belgian military had adopted all the French defence methods against a possible large-scale tank attack followed by motorized divisions. The previous completion of the Albert Canal, reaching from Antwerp to Liége, was an aid to defensive dispositions, as it constituted a defensive line against the weakly held frontier facing Holland; while between Liége and Namur there was the Meuse, with the Ourthe further eastward, to protect the Namur line from an invasion across the German frontier.

HALF LUXEMBURG'S ARMY ON PARADE

In 1914, breaking all her pledges, Germany invaded the neutral Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, seized hostages and stripped the country of food and raw material. Twenty-five years later Luxemburg was faced with prospects of another German invasion, and as her army, a good proportion of which is seen below, numbers only about 250 men, she could not have resisted.

Photo, W. Seldow





HOLLAND'S PREMIER

Jonkheer W. De Geer (above), Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in the Dutch Government formed on August 9, 1939. He was Prime Minister from 1926 to 1929, and was three times Minister of Finance.

Photo, E.N.A.



DUTCH DEFENCE CHIEF

Major-General I. H. Reynders, former Chief of the Dutch General Staff. Under his direction measures were taken for the flooding of the inundation zones, to cope with a possible German invasion.

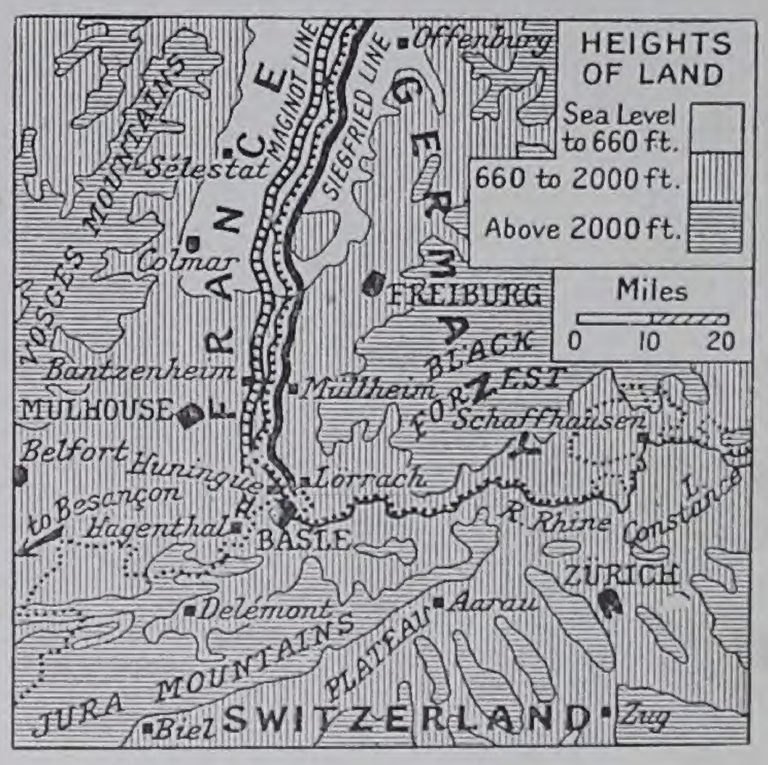
Photo, Sport & General

It was recalled that the so-called Maastricht Appendix in the south of Holland was a danger point near the "Aachen Gap," through which the heaviest German assaults had been made in 1914. The emergency work on fortifications, therefore, was largely to strengthen this part of the frontier southward to the hilly and wooded Ardennes country. Between this region and the French fortifications to the south-west, against Luxemburg, stood Liége as the pivot of a powerful system of fortifications. Thus Belgian pre-war preparations, and the country's calm firmness of purpose in co-operation with the Dutch, had by December, 1939, done what was possible to counter a lightning rush through these strategically vital countries. A successful resistance would depend, of course, on timely aid from Britain and France, and this in turn would not be practicable in the absence of prior Staff consultations with the Allies. As far as was known, considerations of neutrality and fear of Germany had prevented any joint plans.

Belgium Prepared

What, then, was the situation of Switzerland on the southern flank of the Maginot Line? As in Holland, there had been a strong pro-German element in the country during the war of 1914–18, but again, as in Holland, this feeling had been almost submerged by the events preceding the Second Great War, and by the course of the first four months of hostilities. The French had extended their fortifications to the south, close to the Swiss border, where a German attempt to invade France by crossing the north-west corner of Switzerland might be made. But, as was the case with the neutral countries on France's western frontier, such precautionary measures did not by any means preclude the possibilities of an onslaught by the huge German war machine, once the Nazi leaders should decided on a break-through. Moreover, a German invasion could be made farther east, near Lake Constance, although the Rhine constituted here a strong defensive line. The Swiss, in spite of their diversity of languages and their small resources, were completely united and had diligently increased their defences on all the possible routes of invasion. This ancient Federal Republic, with a population much less than that of Greater London, instituted a complete conscription of its man-power, and by December, 1939, had a mobilized army of 600,000 men. These were well-trained in defensive warfare, and knew how to use to the utmost the difficulties of the mountainous terrain; they were so well equipped with machine-guns and small automatic guns that the Swiss infantry were said to have the greatest relative fire-power of any army.

It was realized that if the Germans should invade Switzerland near the French frontier, the Swiss defence could be aided by French heavy artillery. An important factor, added to the thorough-going preparedness of the Swiss, that weighed against the probability of a German invasion was the neutrality of Italy, who by threatening the southern frontiers could have seriously divided the Swiss defensive resources. In Switzerland, from the very beginning of the war, there had been no illusion at all as to the direction from which danger was to be apprehended. No Swiss expected his country's neutrality to be ignored by the French, and the former pro-German elements (which had become pro-Nazi in the preceding few years) received their final disillusionment by the Nazi-Soviet pact and its consequences. The strong anti-Socialist element of French-speaking Switzerland, who feared French Communism and confused it even with the Socialist policy of M. Blum, shared in this change of heart with the German-speaking moneyed classes in the industrial parts around Zürich. They could not but realize, with the lesson before them of the fate of Poland and the subsequent Russian attack on Finland, what would be the lot of Switzerland if ravaged by the German hordes. Relatively the Swiss defensive measures were greater than those of any other neutral, and the economic strain—apart from the demand upon the male population for service—was exceptionally severe.



BARRIER AGAINST INVASION

Above are the southern portions of the Maginot and Siegfried Lines, extended in the Northern and Jura regions to guard against outflanking movements.

After something like a scare in October, 1939, which was partially revived in November, the Swiss resumed their state of calm preparedness, conscious of the hindrances they could interpose against a German march through their country. Not that this preparedness did away with the possibility of the disaster occurring, any more

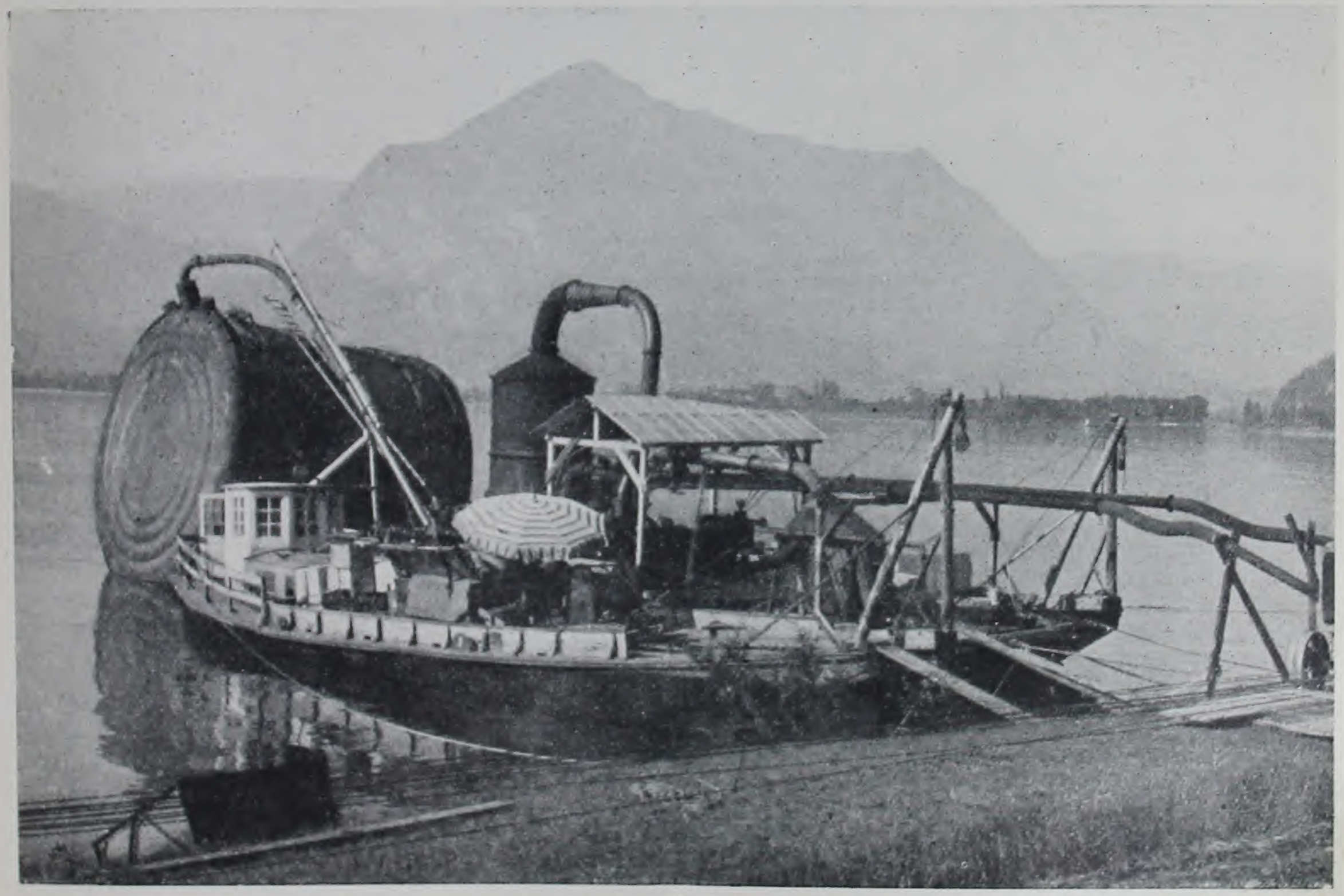




EVEN PEACEFUL SWITZERLAND PREPARES

Above, a machine-gun section of the Swiss Army during the course of Alpine manoeuvres. Right, concrete anti-tank defences erected along the flat portions of the Swiss frontier. The photograph below shows one method by which the Swiss hoped, in case of emergency, to preserve foodstuffs from bombs and contamination. A huge caisson, filled with 210 tons of grain, is being sunk beneath the waters of a lake.

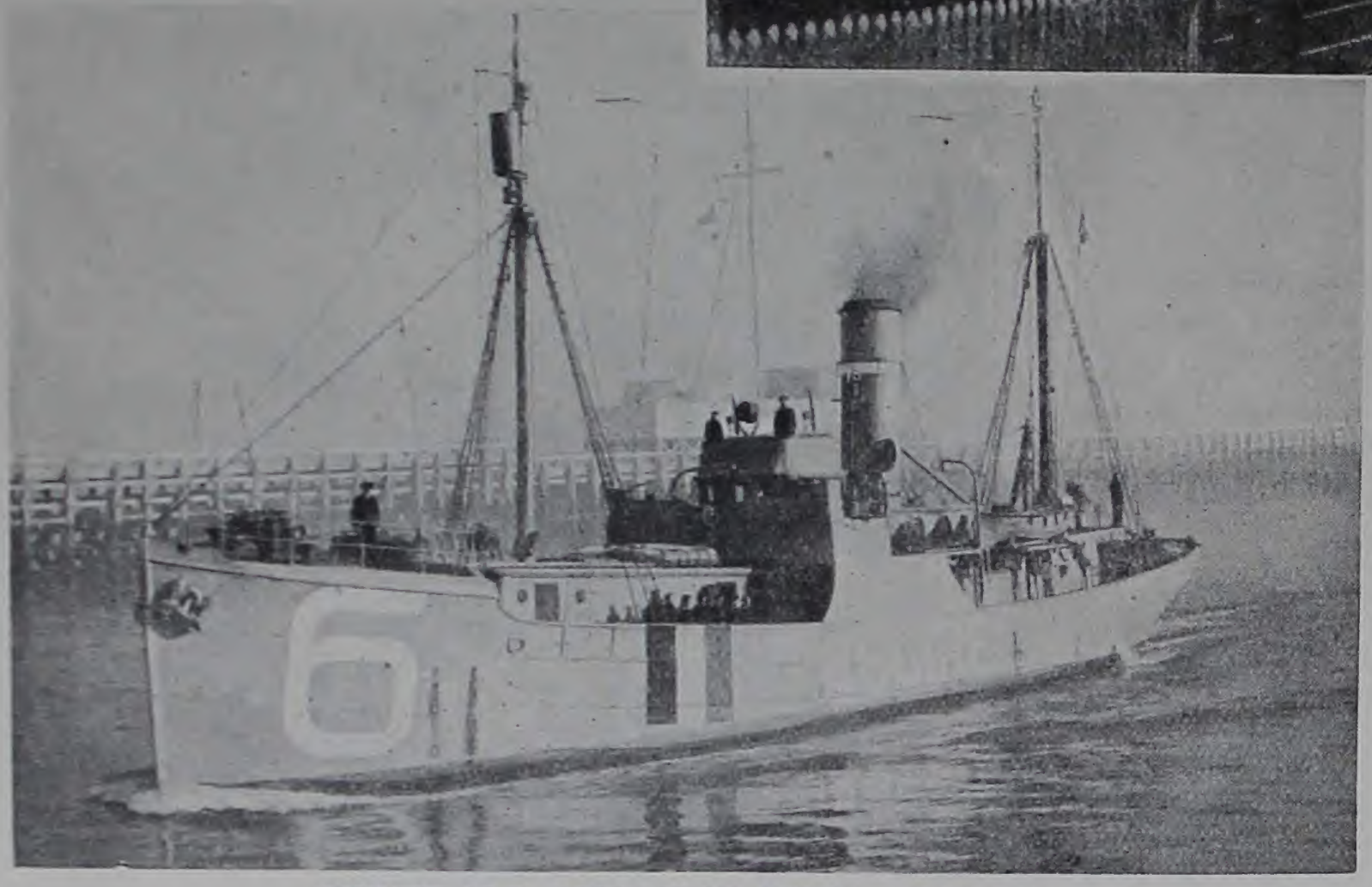
Photos, Mondiale; Planet News



than the Belgian-Dutch defences precluded overwhelming invasion; but it was clearly realized what the effort would mean for the German forces. Indeed, the German High Command was reported to have reckoned on taking forty days to get across Switzerland, if they used five German soldiers for every Swiss, while the French command's estimate was thirty-seven days.

The attitude of Spain in the conflict, though scarcely less important to the Allies in the long run, involved entirely different considerations. Neutrality was enforced on the Franco Government, and was in no danger of being broken by any outside Power. Spain during the latter part of 1939 offered a notable example of how the mistakes of British





NEUTRALS AND THE MINE MENACE

Neutral countries suffered equally with the Allies from the indiscriminate sowing of German mines. The upper photograph shows a Dutch fisherman's house in Texel, damaged by a mine which exploded on the coast. Above, a Belgian anti-mine patrol vessel leaving port.

Photos, E.N.A.; Planet News

and French foreign policy—mistakes that might have had very serious perils for both—had been cancelled out by the enormities of the Nazi regime. For the Government in Spain, owing its conquest of the country to the assistance of Italy and Germany, had been prepared to be pro-Nazi and pro-Fascist during a conflict, as far as it dared. This meant, among other things that its coasts could surreptitiously have afforded harbourage and supplies to roaming U-boats, while France's southern frontier would have been insecure unless French divisions were diverted to guard it. But, in fact, Spain, the latest convert to the anti-Comintern pact of farcical memory, was entirely disillusioned by the Nazi rapprochement with Soviet Russia and the partition of Poland.

Subsequent developments in the Nazi-Soviet gamble confirmed this attitude, and showed also that Fascist Italy, the main upholder of the Franco regime, had been virtually cast aside by the Nazis in favour of the Soviet. The immediate concrete result of the outbreak of war, as seen by Spanish eyes, was the complete establishment of the naval blockade of Germany, symbolized by the rush of German ships (totalling about 200,000 tons) to be interned in Spanish ports. Regular deliveries of minerals and other important commodities to Germany, which had been started to pay for Nazi supplies to the Spanish insurgents during the civil war, came to a sudden end. It may be supposed that the Franco Government, faced with an appalling economic problem at home, did not regret this, or that the future of its neutrality lay in the direction of re-instituting trading agreements with France and Britain. The disappearance of the Popular Front in French politics, under the stress of the national emergency, appears to have been quite unexpected in Spain; but it certainly encouraged the worried new rulers of that deeply divided country to look towards France for co-operation.

Since Portuguese neutrality, under the dictatorship of Dr. Salazar, was not unfriendly to the powerful Democracies, and Portugal had plainly benefited in her trade and her external security, the only logical development of Spanish policy, short of any breach with Italy, was towards a similar neutrality, which could do nothing to assist the predatory Nazi Power in the hour of trial.

Portugal's Position

It was becoming apparent by December, 1939, that the moment was ripe for some initiative by British economic and cultural interests on the lines of that of the French, who by November, through Marshal Pétain, the French Government's representative, had done much to counteract the quondam influence of the Germans. The Lycée Français in Madrid had already been re-opened, and from this lecturers and books began to circulate. The German propaganda service was still active, and in Barcelona a German School offered scholarships for Insurgent orphans. Plainly an English College in Madrid was called for, similar to the British Institute in Lisbon. The great amount of reconstruction needed after the devastating civil war made a development of foreign trade urgent, and the Allied countries offered a ready market for most of Spain's important agricultural and mineral products.

Chapter 44

BRITAIN'S STATESMEN LEADERS IN THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE WAR

The Premier's Efforts for Peace—Winston Churchill Again at the Admiralty —A Change in the War Secretariat—Air Minister—Lord Halifax as Foreign Secretary—The Ministers of Supply and Home Security—Lord Chatfield— W. S. Morrison, and his Namesake of the L.C.C.—Sir John Reith as a Minister—The Ministry of Economic Warfare—Labour Party Leaders

No appreciation of the services of the politicians and administrators who were in charge of Britain's national affairs at the outbreak of the Second Great War could fittingly begin without a grateful tribute to the Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain.

Through the years of stress which preceded hostilities he had proved himself to be a great statesman of the modern world. Not for the first time the peace of the British Empire and the liberties of Europe were threatened in the autumn of 1938 by the ambitions of a ruthless dictator. In the past such a threat had been met by diplomatic interchanges between representatives of the governments concerned; if these pourparlers failed in their object they were followed by the movements of armies, and when this stage had been reached it was very difficult indeed to call a halt.

The Prime Minister

In September, 1938, Mr. Chamberlain introduced an entirely new element into international relationship when, at the time of the Czechoslovak crisis, he twice visited Herr Hitler in an attempt, by a personal talk, to smooth away difficulties and thus avert a war which then seemed inevitable. That the agreements which he arrived at were cynically repudiated by the German Leader in no way detracts from the courage of the Premier's action.

Throughout the succeeding year Mr. Chamberlain strove, as few men have striven, for a peaceful solution of the European problem. He did so in the face of constant rebuffs, in negotiations with a government to whom the pledged word had no meaning, in the face of military preparations on the most blatant and provocative scale, with the fate of Czechoslovakia to remind him that no considerations of humanity would preserve Germany's future victims from the same tortures and the same serfdom.

But when the testing moment came, when the national honour demanded that force should be met by force and that a system based on "bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecution" should be destroyed, the Prime Minister emerged as a man calmly confident of the rectitude of his cause and of its ultimate victory. Who could detect a whisper of vainglory in the solemn words with which he addressed the House on the morning of September 3? (*See* Historic Documents, No. 3.)

"It is a sad day for all of us. For none is it sadder than for me. Everything that I worked for, everything that I had hoped for, everything that I believed in during my public life has crashed into ruins this morning. There is only one thing left for me and that is to devote what strength and powers I have to forwarding the victory of the cause for which we have to sacrifice so much."

One of the Premier's first acts when war became inevitable was to recall to the Admiralty Winston Churchill. This stirred the public imagination much as did the recall of Lord Kitchener in 1914. Mr. A. G. Gardiner has aptly described Churchill's career as a "breathless gallop through life," and it was fitting that he should ride triumphantly back to the post which he had filled so brilliantly in 1914.



THE NAZI 'ENEMY No. 1'

Immensely popular with the British public was the decision made at the outbreak of war to recall Mr. Winston Churchill to his old post of First Lord of the Admiralty.

War Office Photograph : Crown Copyright

Scion of the noble house of Marlborough, son of Lord Randolph Churchill, one of the most dazzling politicians of the Victorian era, Churchill (like Gort) was educated at Harrow and Sandhurst. He saw service as a soldier or war correspondent in the Sudan, in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, and in South Africa during the Boer War. A thrilling escape from captivity while acting as newspaper correspondent brought his name prominently before the public. He became a lieutenant in a light horse regiment and saw a good deal of fighting, but, the war being over, decided, as he said, to have "a shot at politics." In 1900 he entered the House as M.P. for Oldham.

Leaving the Conservative Party, he was returned as a Liberal (N.W. Manchester) in 1906, and began almost at once that meteoric career during which he was to fill more government offices than any other British statesman. He began as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. Successively through the years he became President of the Board of Trade, Home Secretary, and First Lord of the Admiralty (in 1911). In 1915, following a disagreement with Lord Fisher, Churchill was relegated to the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, and he thereupon resigned to command a battalion in France. Under Lloyd George he became Minister of Munitions (1917) and Secretary of State for War (1919), and under Stanley Baldwin he was appointed Colonial Secretary (1921) and Chancellor of the Exchequer (1924–29).

Winston Churchill

As an example of the human touch that Churchill never failed to apply to any job he undertook, there is a story of his days as Chancellor of the Exchequer. A widow who had brought up





two sons on a minute income had been rewarded by their industry and brilliance. One had won his way by scholarships to Oxford, the other to a London hospital as a medical student. Both these stages in a career are normally costly, and a minor income-tax official questioned the mother as to how on her returned income she could possibly afford the expense. The lady was so indignant at her word being questioned that she wrote a letter of complaint to the Treasury. She was asked to call, was ushered into the Chancellor's room, where she received his apologies and an assurance that the impertinent official had been severely dealt with.

WAR MINISTERS OLD AND NEW

Cabinet changes took place on January 5, 1940, following the resignation of Mr. Hore-Belisha (seen above presiding over a session of the Army Council), who had been Secretary of State for War since 1937. He was succeeded in that office by Mr. Oliver Stanley, who is seen (below, left) arriving at the War Office to take up his new duties.

Photos, "Daily Mirror"; Associated Press

Winston Churchill's record at the Admiralty in the last war is well enough known. His adventure at Antwerp, the sending over of a handful of Marines and ill-equipped volunteers to lift the German siege, has been ridiculed, but it had a very desirable effect in staying the main German advance for some days and contributing to the situation which led to the turn of the tide at the Marne. The Gallipoli campaign was a brilliant conception, and might have been a decisive factor in the war had it been backed up in time by the political and military chiefs. But there is nothing to detract from one result of his labours at the Admiralty—the efficiency and readiness of the Fleet in 1914.

For ten years before the outbreak of the present war Winston Churchill had been in political exile. He employed his time in writing works (such as his Life of the Duke of Marlborough and his "World Crisis") which are assured of immortality. In opposition he was a ruthless, bu never a captious, critic. Latterly there was one thing he harped upon with all the powerful urgency at his command, and that was the ever-growing menace of Nazidom to the peace of Europe. He it was who first drew attention to the rapid and open re-armament of the Germans and prophesied the ruthlessness of their intentions. Little wonder that he became their Enemy No. 1.

There was a growing resentment among the British people in the last years before 1939 that his great talents were not employed by the Government, and an immense sense of relief was felt when it was announced that he was to return after 25 years to the chair at the Admiralty. Churchill had lost none of his youthful resilience of mind, but had increasingly fortified it from the vast store of his experience. Through his broadcasts and his parliamentary announcements the public were soon to know that he had lost nothing also of his pugnacity. In the same character sketch mentioned above, A. G. Gardiner said: "His genius is at its highest in a world of tumult. His spirit rises with the tempest and all his faculties of vision, imagination and action are at the highest stretch." Those early speeches, with their touch of braggadocio, their wealth of detail, their note of defiance and contempt of a corrupt enemy, were of incalculable value in raising the spirits of a people perplexed at the protracted inaction of the war on land.

War Ministers

At the outbreak of war Mr. Leslie Hore-Belisha had held the post of Secretary of State for War since 1937. His resignation on January 5, 1940, and the appointment of Mr. Oliver Stanley, caused a political sensation. Hore-Belisha was offered the Presidency of the Board of Trade, but he refused, and it was accepted by Sir Andrew Duncan. Mr. Hore-Belisha's disappearance from Whitehall came as a considerable shock



Wing and Fuselage



Fuselage



Beneath Wing



Fuselage



Wing and Fuselage



Rudder (Army)

UNITED STATES



Wing



Top of Wing



Wing



Rudder

CHINA



Wing and Fuselage



Rudder

GERMANY



Fuselage



Rudder

ITALY



Wing and Fuselage



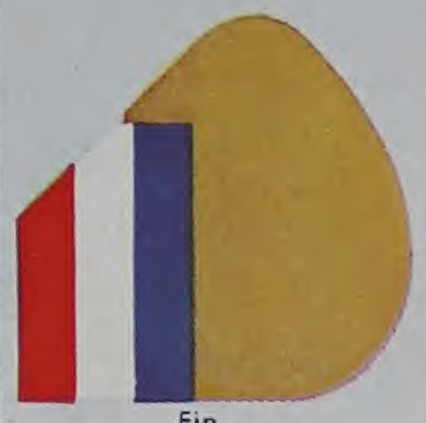
Rudder

GREECE



Wing, Fuselage and Rudder

RUSSIA



Fin

GREAT BRITAIN



Wing, Fuselage and Rudder

JAPAN



Rudder

YUGOSLAVIA



Wing and Fuselage

ALLIED AND AXIS AIR FORCE MARKINGS

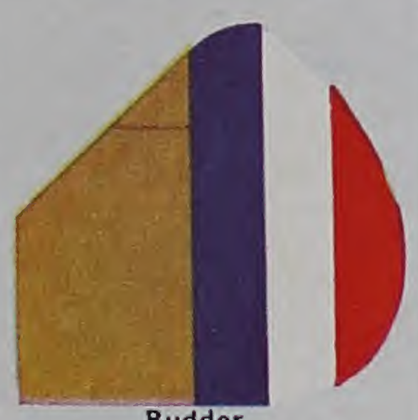
In pp. 936, 1155, 1330 and 1724 are illustrated various emblems of individual machines and squadrons of the belligerent air forces : here are shown the distinctive national markings displayed by the Powers engaged on either side. It will be noted that in most instances the markings on wing, fuselage and rudder are different in design though similar in colour. The Chinese colours were used by the American Volunteer Group which distinguished itself in the Burmese campaign of 1942.

Specially drawn for THE SECOND GREAT WAR *by E. C. Mansell*

(For operational purposes the central red disk in the U.S.A. marking was removed in 1942.)



Wing and Fuselage



Rudder

FREE FRANCE



Wing and Fuselage



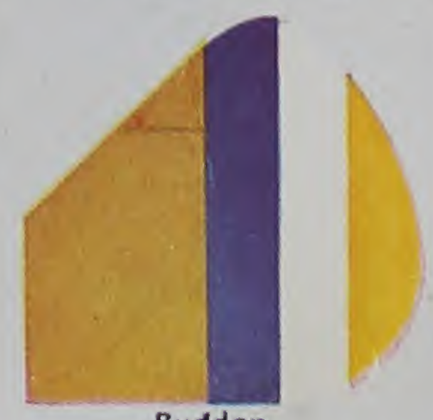
Rudder

NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES



Wing, Fuselage and Rudder

POLAND



Rudder

SOUTH AFRICA



THE offensive sweeps in daylight over the Channel and Occupied France, which began in June, 1941, were a departure from the conventional role of the fighter, which is normally a defensive one. In a broader sense the sweeps were still part of Britain's defensive operations, since they destroyed aerodromes and aircraft that would be employed in raids on our own cities and airfields. From June 14 the sweeps were continued throughout the month, and another series began on July 1 and went on until the 24th, with only six days' remission. This fine photograph shows a formation of Hurricanes heading out for a Channel sweep. As a fighter the Hurricane is armed with 12 machine-guns or with four cannon. Later in the year came the news that Hurricanes had been fitted with bomb racks and were being employed as low-level surprise bombers—a remarkable innovation for this versatile aircraft, which first went into service as long ago as 1939.

From a direct colour photograph by Fox Photos



AS a long-range bomber the Vickers-Armstrong Wellington proved itself in many operations in widely varying climates. The bombers seen here are setting out for a daylight raid over Germany ; the first of these extensive operations by day was carried out on April 12, 1941. Wellingtons made successful night attacks on objectives in Northern Italy, while on other occasions our squadrons bombed Berlin and Hamburg, with a great many other targets of the Nazi war industry. Formations were sent to reinforce our bomber forces in the Middle East, and operated with much credit over the Western Desert of Libya. A twin-engined aircraft, the Wellington is built on the geodetic principle of construction, in which the skin of the framework is made up of a great many members crossing each other spirally—imparting enormous strength and saving weight. The speed is 265 m.p.h. or more. There are power-operated gun turrets in nose and tail.

From a direct colour photograph by Fox Photos



SERVICE POLICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Naval, military and air force police of the Allies photographed in London in 1942. (1) British military policeman. (2) Policewoman of the W.A.A.F. (3) United States. (4) Policewoman of the A.T.S. (5) Fighting French Forces. (6) Belgian military policeman. (7) Norwegian Forces. (8) Royal Naval picquet policeman. (9) Royal Netherlands Forces. (10) Policeman of the R.A.F. (11) Polish Forces.

Specially photographed for THE SECOND GREAT WAR

to the public, for of all Ministers he was perhaps best known generally to the people, who had come to regard him as a man of energy and initiative who did not shrink from unconventional methods and drastic reforms.

His first step in the Government had been as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, and from 1934 to 1937 he was Minister of Transport. His drive and imagination were at once directed towards reducing the appalling casualties of the roads, and his beacons and road lights will remain his monument. In 1937 he became Secretary of State for War, an appointment much criticized at the time but which he was fully to justify. Under his leadership the reorganization of the Army proceeded rapidly. Mechanization was completed and many essential reforms introduced. These did not consist solely of new drill, more practical uniforms, improvements in conditions and rates of pay, but comprised the infusion of a new spirit through which much unnecessary red tape and petty discipline were abolished.

Under his rule at the War Office, in April, 1939, conscription was for the first time in Great Britain introduced in peacetime, and his handling of the new Militia was an example of his tact and understanding. At the time of the September crisis of 1938 he was much criticized for the unreadiness of the anti-aircraft defences, and it was largely at his instance that a Ministry of Supply was set up.

The appointment of Mr. Oliver Stanley as Secretary of State for War came as almost as great a surprise as the resignation of his predecessor in this office. Although Stanley had filled a number of important ministerial posts —such as Minister of Transport, Minister of Labour, President of the Board of Trade—and had held them with efficiency and rising reputation, his work had attracted little public attention. He was the only surviving son of the Earl of Derby, War Minister appointed in 1916, and the fourth of the illustrious family of Stanley to hold that office.

Mr. Stanley was educated at Eton and Oxford, and served as a major in the R.A.F. during the war of 1914–18; he won the Croix de Guerre and was mentioned in dispatches. Later he was called to the Bar and had represented Westmorland as a Conservative since 1924. A self-effacing politician and a comparatively young man (he was 43 at the time of his appointment), it was generally felt that he would have a hard task to replace the vivid personality and energetic "drive" of his predecessor, Mr. Hore-Belisha.

Very different in character and appearance, in his origins, and in the circumstances of his career was his colleague at the Air Ministry, Sir Kingsley Wood, who started the rough and tumble of life as an articled clerk in a lawyer's office in Brighton. He did well, became a magistrate, and later set up as a solicitor in London. His first essay in politics was as Conservative member for Woolwich on the London County Council. It was as member for West Woolwich that he entered the House in 1918, and in the same year he was knighted.

He was medically unfit to serve during the war of 1914–18, but did much useful public work. Shortly after his election to Parliament he became Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister of Health, whose Department during the period of reconstruction was the most important in Whitehall. In the succeeding years he was to become Under-Secretary (to Mr. Neville Chamberlain) and Minister of Health himself in 1935. Before this, on the return of the National Government in 1931, he had been made Postmaster-General. His business abilities showed to their best in this pre-eminently "business" post.

Minister for Air

His appointment as Secretary of State for Air was justified by his long record of success in other administrative posts. To this vitally important office he brought his great organizing ability, the tact to smooth out difficulties, the human touch in his relationship with the rank and file, and a driving power invaluable in speeding up production. "Immediately the war broke out," Sir Kingsley told the House of Commons, "our carefully prepared plans for greatly increased production were put into effect. They will mean, in due course, a rate of production more than twice the considerable figure we have now reached."

In time of war the Government leaders of the fighting forces necessarily claim most of the limelight. Such distinguished figures as Lord Halifax, Foreign Secretary, or Mr. Anthony Eden, appointed Secretary for the Dominions with access to the Cabinet, necessarily withdrew to less spectacular

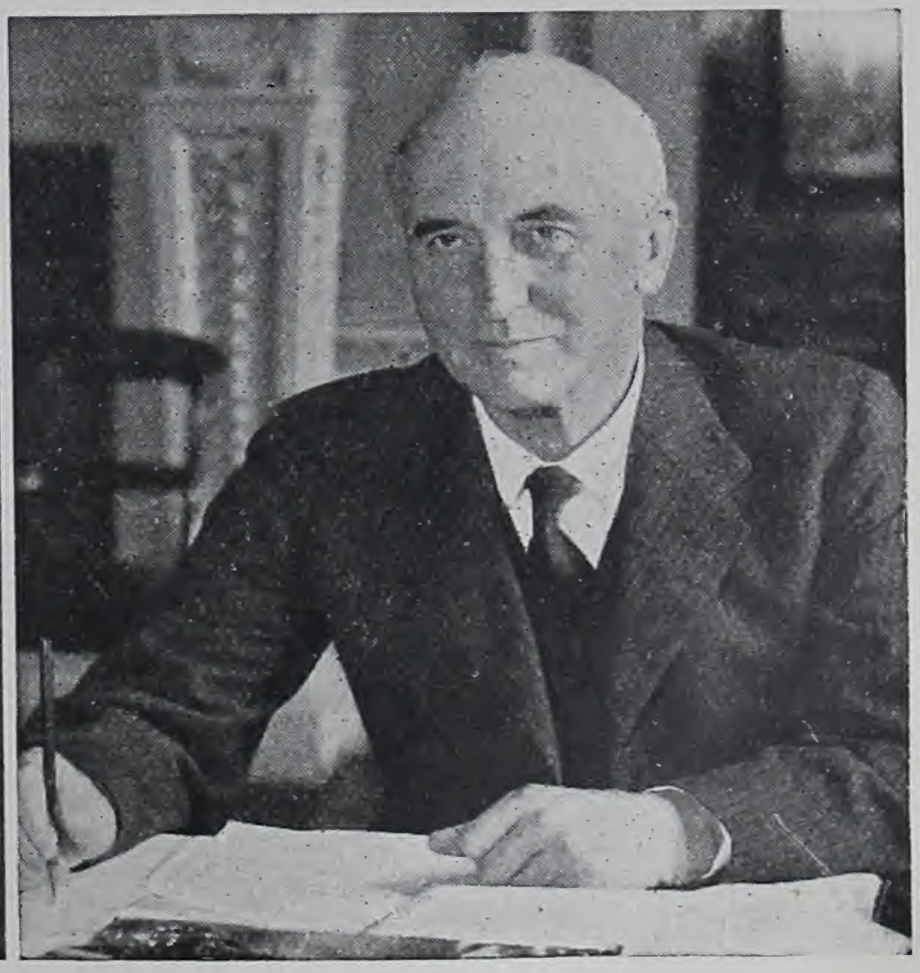
THREE MEMBERS OF THE WAR CABINET

Below are three prominent members of the British War Cabinet. From left to right: Sir Kingsley Wood, Secretary for Air; Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary; and Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer. The last-named held Cabinet office during the First Great War, having been Home Secretary from 1915 to 1916.

Photos, Central Press









CO-ORDINATOR OF DEFENCE

Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield (above) served in the war of 1914–18 as Flag-Captain to Admiral Beatty. He joined the Cabinet in 1939 as Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence.

Photo, Vandyk

tasks. A reshuffle might bring them forward again, but in the meantime their great past services could not be forgotten.

Lord Halifax, who as Mr. Edward Wood became member for Ripon and Under-Secretary for the Colonies, was a son of that picturesque old Viscount who in his time was lay leader of the Church of England. Before his father died he was created Baron Irwin and sent to India as Viceroy at the age of 45. He met the movement of Hindu Civil Disobedience with tact and courage and gained the confidence of the leader Gandhi. His later parliamentary career found him President of the Board of Education, Lord Privy Seal and, on the resignation of Mr. Eden, Foreign Secretary. He has been described as "the heavyweight in the Cabinet" and a more than probable successor to the Premiership had he not sat in the House of Lords. His handling of the events which led to the declaration of war is now public property in the pages of the British Blue Book. While leaving no stone unturned to avert the fate of Poland and secure peace by negotiation, he never disguised or left uncertain Britain's determination to honour her guarantees by force of arms.

Viscount Halifax

Sir John Simon, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, grappled immediately with the formidable task of financing another great war, introducing an income tax of 7s. 6d. in the pound and other burdensome but necessary taxation. Sir John, as a Liberal, was Attorney-General in Mr. Asquith's cabinet in 1914. He was a brilliant K.C., one of the famous trio who were contemporaries at Wadham College, Oxford, the other two being F. E. Smith (Lord Birkenhead) and C. B. Fry, the renowned athlete. Like Winston Churchill, he had in 1939 graduated to the position of elder statesman, a man who had held many Government posts with high credit and who, as Chancellor in a most critical time, commanded universal confidence.

Mr. Leslie Burgin, M.P., the Minister of Supply, had taken up office in April, 1939, many months before the outbreak of war, when the new Ministry had been instituted. His department had got well into its stride by September, and in the first month of hostilities it distributed orders to the value of over £110,000,000. The Rt. Hon. Edward Leslie Burgin had had a distinguished career in the legal profession. The war of 1914–18 found him a solicitor—he had been 1st in First Class Honours of the LL.B exam. and in the Final exam. of the Law Society. He served as Intelligence Officer and was awarded the Italian Croce di Guerra. He had represented the Luton Division since 1929, first as Liberal and later as Liberal-Nationalist. Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade from 1932 to 1937, he became then Minister of Transport and Privy Councillor.

Every national crisis demands some infiltration from outside purely political circles. Of this character was the appointment as Minister of Home Security of Sir John Anderson, a man who had proved his immense administrative ability in India and elsewhere. To him fell the task of imposing all those restrictions summed up in the word black-out; the setting up and organization of the various auxiliary services necessary to efficient A.R.P. work. As the months passed without any serious aerial attack Sir John became the object of murmurings of complaint at the disorganization which was being caused to civil life, but he wisely relaxed the vigilance only very gradually, and that only in minor particulars.

Sir John Anderson

At the same time that the Prime Minister accepted the resignation of Mr. Hore-Belisha, he also received that of Lord Macmillan, Minister of Information, and replaced this distinguished Law Lord by Sir John Reith, former head of the B.B.C. Sir John's masterful personality and great administrative powers made this choice an extremely popular one. The young Glasgow engineering apprentice, who had so successfully guided the progress of the B.B.C., had captured the imagination of the public, who regarded Sir John as eminently fitted to surmount the difficulties of a much criticized department.

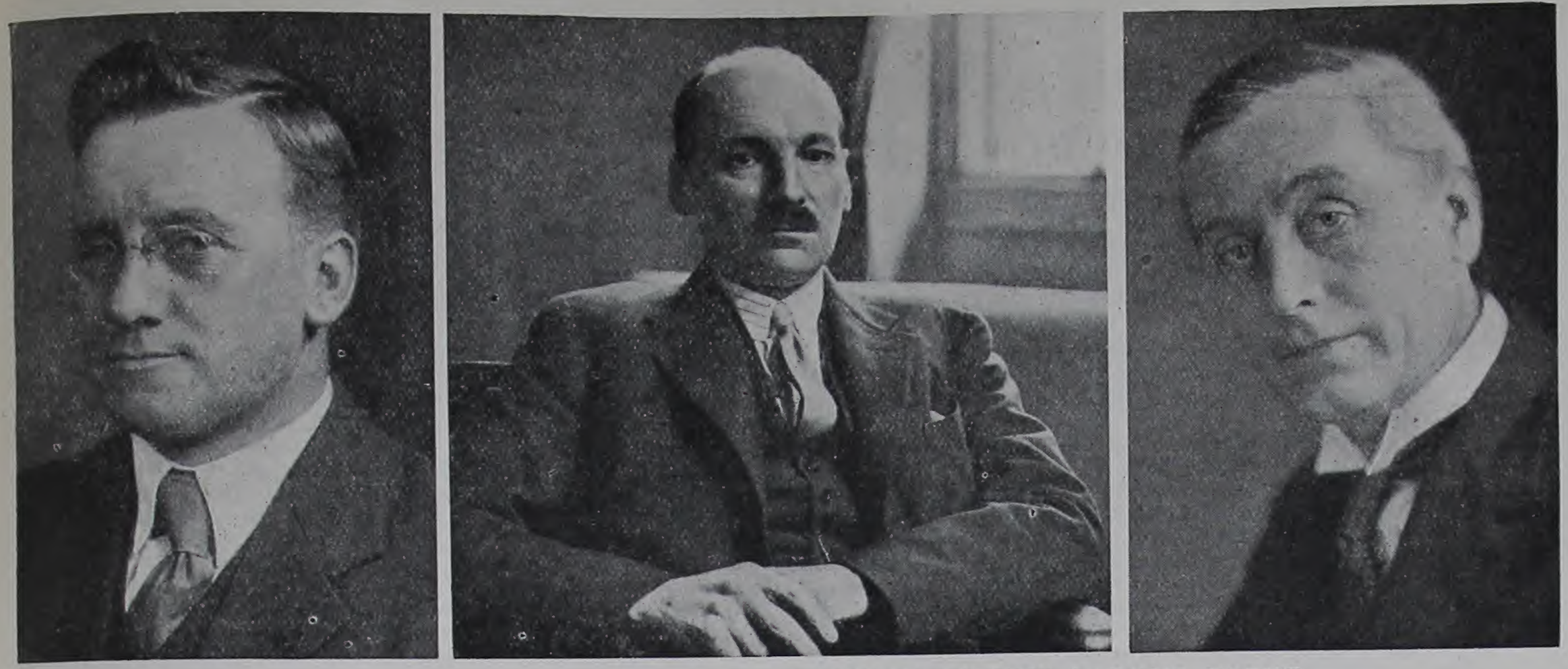




MINISTERS OF INFORMATION

Sir John Reith (right), Chairman of British Overseas Airways Corporation and formerly Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation from 1927 to 1938, was appointed Minister of Information on January 5, 1940, following the resignation of Lord Macmillan (left).

Photos, Forces Press; Keystone



LEADERS OF THE LABOUR PARTY

Above are three prominent personalities of the Labour Party. From left to right: the Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison, Leader of the London County Council ; Major C. R. Attlee, Leader of His Majesty's Opposition in the House of Commons since 1935 ; Rt. Hon. Arthur Greenwood, M.P. for Wakefield and Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Photos, Vandyk ; Central Press ; Navana

Another appointment from outside which was exceedingly popular was that of Admiral Lord Chatfield to be Minister for Co-ordination of Defence. His last official post had been as First Sea Lord. He was 65 when he was appointed, looked ten years younger, a man who kept himself fit and was still sufficiently alert in mind and body to tackle a big job. It was to him, when acting as Flag-Captain to Beatty at the battle of Jutland, that Beatty had made his famous remark : " What's the matter with our damned ships, Chatfield ? "

Minister of Food

Two leaders of the same name held two jobs which vitally affected the private lives of millions of people. They were Mr. W. S. Morrison, Minister of Food (and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), and Mr. Herbert Stanley Morrison, leader of the London County Council and Chairman of the London A.R.P. Mr. W. S. Morrison had long been recognized as one of the ablest of the junior ministers, and it was fitting that he should be given the difficult and complicated task of conserving the nation's food supplies and rationing the consumer. The work was not carried through without some dislocation and some temporary injustices, but Mr. Morrison rode the tempest and quickly reduced chaos to order. As a preliminary step a National Register was taken. This was directed by a permanent civil servant, Sir Sylvanus Vivian, Registrar-General, as was also the issue of identity cards. Sir Sylvanus did invaluable work in the First Great War in the Ministry of Food and the Ministry of National Service.

The manifold activities and great responsibilities of Mr. H. S. Morrison as leader of the L.C.C. need not be detailed. In the organization of the evacuation of mothers and children and the speeding up of air-raid precautions, he did work of incalculable importance.

Two other wartime appointments deserve mention, that of Sir John Gilmour as Minister of Shipping, which was greeted by some murmurs of dissent on account of lack of experience, and Mr. Ronald Hibbert Cross as Minister of Economic Warfare. Sir John had held the offices of Minister of Agriculture and Home Secretary and was recognized as an able Chairman of Committees. Mr. Cross, who had been a Government Whip and Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, had a familiarity with economic problems gained as a merchant banker.



NEW BOARD OF TRADE CHIEF

Sir Andrew Duncan (above), a Member of the Economic Advisory Council and a Director of the Bank of England, took Mr. Oliver Stanley's place as President of the Board of Trade on January 5, 1940, when Mr. Stanley became Secretary of State for War.

Photo, Elliott & Fry

Another appointment made in the reconstructed Ministry of January, 1940, was that of Sir Andrew Duncan to the Presidency of the Board of Trade, a department whose responsibilities had increased enormously owing to the war. Sir Andrew had held many high posts in industry, including that of Chairman of the Central Electricity Board, and he was a Director of the Bank of England. His experience and ability well fitted him for this essentially business post.

Opposition Leaders

A word must be added with regard to His Majesty's Opposition. At the outbreak of war the leader, Major Attlee, was indisposed and his place taken by Mr. Arthur Greenwood. Immediately before and after the declaration of war Greenwood placed the whole weight of the Labour Party's support at the command of the Prime Minister. He announced that neither he nor his followers would take office on the grounds that the true democratic principles of the country could best be shown to the world by the maintenance of an effective Opposition, pledged to a general support but free to criticize in detail.

Historic Documents. LXXX

FROM RIVER PLATE TO NORTH SEA

In his broadcast of December 18, 1939, which we reproduce below, Mr. Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, recounted with pardonable pride some exploits of the Royal Navy during the preceding week on both sides of the world. Chief of these was the battle of the River Plate on December 13, which ended four days later in the ignominious scuttling of the " Graf Spee " in Montevideo Harbour.

THE news which has come from Montevideo has been received with thankfulness in our islands and with unconcealed satisfaction throughout the greater part of the world.

The " Graf Spee," which has been for many weeks preying upon the trade of the South Atlantic, has met her doom, and throughout the vast expanse of water the peaceful shipping of all nations may for a spell at least enjoy the freedom of the seas. The German pocket battleship, in spite of her far heavier metal and commanding range, was driven to take refuge in a neutral harbour by the three British cruisers, whose names are on every lip. Once in harbour she had the choice of submitting in the ordinary manner to internment, which would have been unfortunate for her, or of coming out to fight and going down in battle like the " Rawalpindi," which would have been honourable to her.

She discovered a third alternative. She came out not to fight but to sink herself in the fairway of a neutral State, from whom she had received such shelter and succour as international law prescribes.

At that time the pocket battleship " Graf Spee " knew that the British heavy ships " Renown " and " Ark Royal " were still a thousand miles away oiling at Rio. All that awaited her outside the harbour were the two six-inch gun cruisers " Ajax " and " Achilles," which had chased her in, and the eight-inch gun cruiser " Cumberland," which had arrived to take the place of the damaged " Exeter."

Our own losses have not been slight. There is no harm now in stating that the " Ajax," in which was Commodore Harwood, now, by His Majesty's pleasure, Rear-Admiral Sir Henry Harwood, K.C.B., had two out of her four turrets knocked out while the " Exeter " bore up against 40 to 50 hits, many of them from shells three times the weight of those she could fire back. Three of her eight-inch guns were smashed, and she sustained nearly 100 casualties, by far the greater part killed.

Nevertheless, the " Exeter " remained outside the harbour of Montevideo, ready, although crippled, to take part in a fresh attack, and she only departed to care for her wounded and injuries when she was relieved by the timely arrival of the " Cumberland."

Daring Feats of British Submarines

HERE at home in the North Sea our British submarines have had the best week I can remember in this or the last war. The exploits of H.M. Submarine " Salmon " last week are remarkably praiseworthy in the highest degree. First she blew to pieces by a volley of torpedoes one of the larger German U-boats which was going out upon a raiding foray. She abstained from torpedoing the " Bremen " when that enormous ship was at her mercy. Her other encounter was the most important point. On Thursday last she observed the German Fleet vessels at one of their rare excursions, and fired torpedoes at a cruiser squadron. She hit one 6,000-ton cruiser with one torpedo and the second cruiser of equal size with two.

These cruisers may have been able to limp home, but this is by no means certain in the case of one of them. When they have reached home they will be out of action for many a long month. Meanwhile the entire German Fleet abandoned whatever enterprise they had and returned in dudgeon to the harbours they had recently quitted. Now today H.M. Submarine " Ursula " reports that on the 14th she sank a 6,000-ton cruiser of the Köln class although it was surrounded by German destroyers.

A considerable proportion of the total German cruiser strength has been sunk or put out of action in a single week, the same week in which almost on the other side of the globe the pocket battleship " Graf Spee " met her inglorious end.

The Nazi Navy and Air Force are venting their wrath for these heavy blows by redoubling their efforts and sinking fishing smacks and drowning fishermen in the North Sea, and yesterday and today their Air Force has been trying to bomb unarmed merchant ships, including an Italian ship, which were moving up and down the East Coast of Britain. They have even in some cases machine-gunned the sailors on the decks of these unarmed merchant ships and fishing boats. I am glad to tell you, however, that the heat of their fury has far exceeded the accuracy of their aim. Out of 24 ships attacked by bombs yesterday and today only six small boats engaged in fishing and one small coasting vessel have been sunk, and the bulk of them, including the Italian vessel, have not even been hit by the many bombs cast upon them.

These outrages are the tactics of a guilty regime which feels the long arm of sea-power laid upon its shoulder. Although German mines of all kinds are being scattered in the seas around our isles, I am able to tell you that the whole vast movement of British traffic is proceeding uninterrupted. I can also tell you that yesterday a division of the Canadian Army, strongly escorted across the ocean, disembarked in one of our home harbours for the purpose of intensive training in England before joining their comrades on the Western Front.

Tribute to Leaders of the Royal Navy

IN view of the successes that have been achieved by the Royal Navy I take the opportunity of drawing the attention of the public to the fact that the present satisfactory position of the naval war is due to the conduct of operations by the First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, also to the naval staff at the Admiralty, of whom Rear-Admiral Phillips is Deputy Chief. Although from time to time a success is recorded, it must not be forgotten that risks are being run all over the world in the protection of trade and for the control of the seas, and that preparations have to be made in many quarters, most of which are never needed and never see the light of day.

It is necessary that the public should have clearly in their minds the principal officers who are conducting these very difficult affairs. The Commander-in-Chief of the Main Fleet, Admiral Sir Charles Forbes, has from the beginning of the war maintained the strong guard required in the Atlantic and North Sea, keeping his ships almost constantly at sea under continued menace of U-boats, aircraft and mines. The Main Fleet has been more days at sea since this war began than has ever been required in any equal period of modern naval war. These responsibilities could not have been discharged if the professional skill of the Admiral had not been sustained by unwearied vigilance and a buoyancy of spirit in the face of many dangers.

But after all, no leadership or expert naval direction could be successful unless it was supported by the whole body of officers and men of the Navy. It is upon these faithful, trusty servants in the great ships and cruisers that the burden falls directly day after day. In particular the flotillas of destroyers, of submarine-watching in the throat of the Elbe, of anti-submarine craft, of minesweepers multiplying on all our coasts, all these have undergone and are undergoing a toil and strain which only those who are informed in detail of their efforts can understand.

THE chance of honour came suddenly to the three cruisers engaged in the South Altantic. We have to go back a long way in naval history to find any more brilliant and resolute fighting than that of the " Exeter," " Ajax," and " Achilles." But if the call had come elsewhere in the oceans or in the narrow seas, skill and courage of equal quality would have been forthcoming.

Many vexatious tasks lie before the Royal Navy, and as I always warn you, rough and violent times lie ahead, but everything that has happened since the beginning of this war should give the nation confidence that in the end the difficulties will be surmounted, the problems solved, the duty done.

Chapter 45

VICTORY OF THE RIVER PLATE: INGLORIOUS END OF THE 'GRAF SPEE'

'Exeter,' 'Ajax' and 'Achilles' Intercept the 'Graf Spee'—H.M.S. 'Exeter' Draws the Fire of the Enemy, while the other Two Light Cruisers Attack on the Opposite Flank—Battered and Out-manoeuvred, the 'Graf Spee' Breaks Off the Action and Flees into Montevideo—Scuttling of the German Battleship and Suicide of her Commander—Homecoming of the Victors

On the morning of Wednesday, December 13, 1939, the three British light cruisers "Achilles" (Captain Parry), "Ajax" (Captain Woodhouse), and "Exeter" (Captain Bell) were patrolling the waters of the South Atlantic about the mouth of the River Plate, the squadron being under the command of Commodore Henry Harwood, who was flying his broad pennant from the "Ajax."

The morning was one of perfect visibility, and at about 6 a.m. there was sighted on the horizon a German battleship, which at the time—and, it seems, throughout the battle which was to follow—was taken to be the "Admiral Scheer." It was, in fact, her sister ship, the "Admiral Graf Spee," another of the three 10,000-ton pocket battleships which since the beginning of the war had been preying on Allied and neutral shipping on the high seas. The recognition was mutual, and the captain of the "Graf Spee," abandoning certain predatory designs on a French steamer, the "Formosa," accepted battle. He was not, he admitted afterwards, in the most favourable position to do so. He was short of fuel owing to the fact that his fuel ship, the "Tacoma," was overdue and therefore he could not speed out to sea. Behind him was the coast. As will be seen, his enemy by brilliant manoeuvring later took full advantage of his embarrassments.

At the moment, however, the German commander had no thought but to inflict the greatest possible damage on the British squadron.

The Fight Begins

The "Exeter" was nearest at hand, the strongest in gun power of the three cruisers, and after one or two ineffectual salvoes he secured a direct hit. Another turret he concentrated on the "Ajax" and the "Achilles." Then began a most unequal duel which was to end with the "Exeter," so crippled that she was reduced to one gun, withdrawing from the battle. But this was the prelude to a fight in which the two remaining British light cruisers harried and attacked their immeasurably more powerful opponent with such skill and daring that, battered and outmatched, she was forced to seek refuge in the neutral harbour of Montevideo.

Such, briefly, was the story of the battle of the River Plate, which four days later was to have its sequel in the ignominious scuttling of the "Graf Spee" in full view of the Uruguayan coast. "We have to go a long way back in naval history," said Winston Churchill, "to find any more brilliant and resolute fighting than that of the 'Exeter,' 'Ajax' and 'Achilles.'"

The circumstances of a naval battle often remain obscure to the strategist and the historian, but the brilliant action off the River Plate presents no such difficulties of explanation. The plan was simple, and though its execution demanded high qualities of manoeuvre and endurance, it never showed any signs of failing in its purpose. It would be a great mistake to imagine that this meeting in the South Atlantic had about it much element of surprise. Commodore Harwood had for a week or more known of the presence of his powerful enemy in South Atlantic waters. His squadron was lying where it was in the full expectation that the encounter would take place. His position was selected and his plan of battle completely familiar to his three captains.

Plan of Attack

The "Exeter" was to attack one flank, the "Ajax" and "Achilles" the other. It is necessary to understand the odds the British cruisers were called upon to face. The "Exeter" (8,390 tons) had six 8-inch guns; the two smaller ships, "Ajax" (6,985 tons) and "Achilles" (7,030 tons) had each eight 6-inch guns. The "Graf Spee," on the other hand, had six 11-inch guns, mounted in turrets, and eight 6-inch guns. Her broadside weighed half as much again as the total broadside of the British cruisers, being 4,708 lb. as against the British 3,136 lb.

Admiral Sir Howard Kelly wrote shortly after the action:

> "To engage a pocket battleship with a squadron of this type was a formidable undertaking. With a squadron of four of the better-armed cruisers the engagement would have been a reasonable proposition; you would expect to lose two cruisers, and that the other two would sink the enemy. Commodore Harwood accepted the risks and his brilliant victory was well deserved."

Commodore Harwood's tactics, Sir Howard added, "were perfectly adapted to the situation." The main system of fire control in all ships being fitted to engage one enemy with full force, "two or more weaker ships engaging a more powerful adversary must spread so as to divide the target." Should the bigger ship concentrate on the smaller ships one by one, then those not being attacked should be able to cause considerable damage.

So when the smoke of the "Graf Spee" was sighted at 6.10 on the morning of December 13, Commodore Harwood's dispositions were already made. The enemy came on, attacking all three ships, but her most deadly



HURRAH FOR HARWOOD!

After the battle of the River Plate, H.M.S. "Ajax," flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Harwood, paid a courtesy visit to Montevideo on January 3, 1940. Admiral Harwood, who received a K.C.B. after the battle, is seen above acknowledging the cheers of the Uruguayan people.

Photo, Wide World

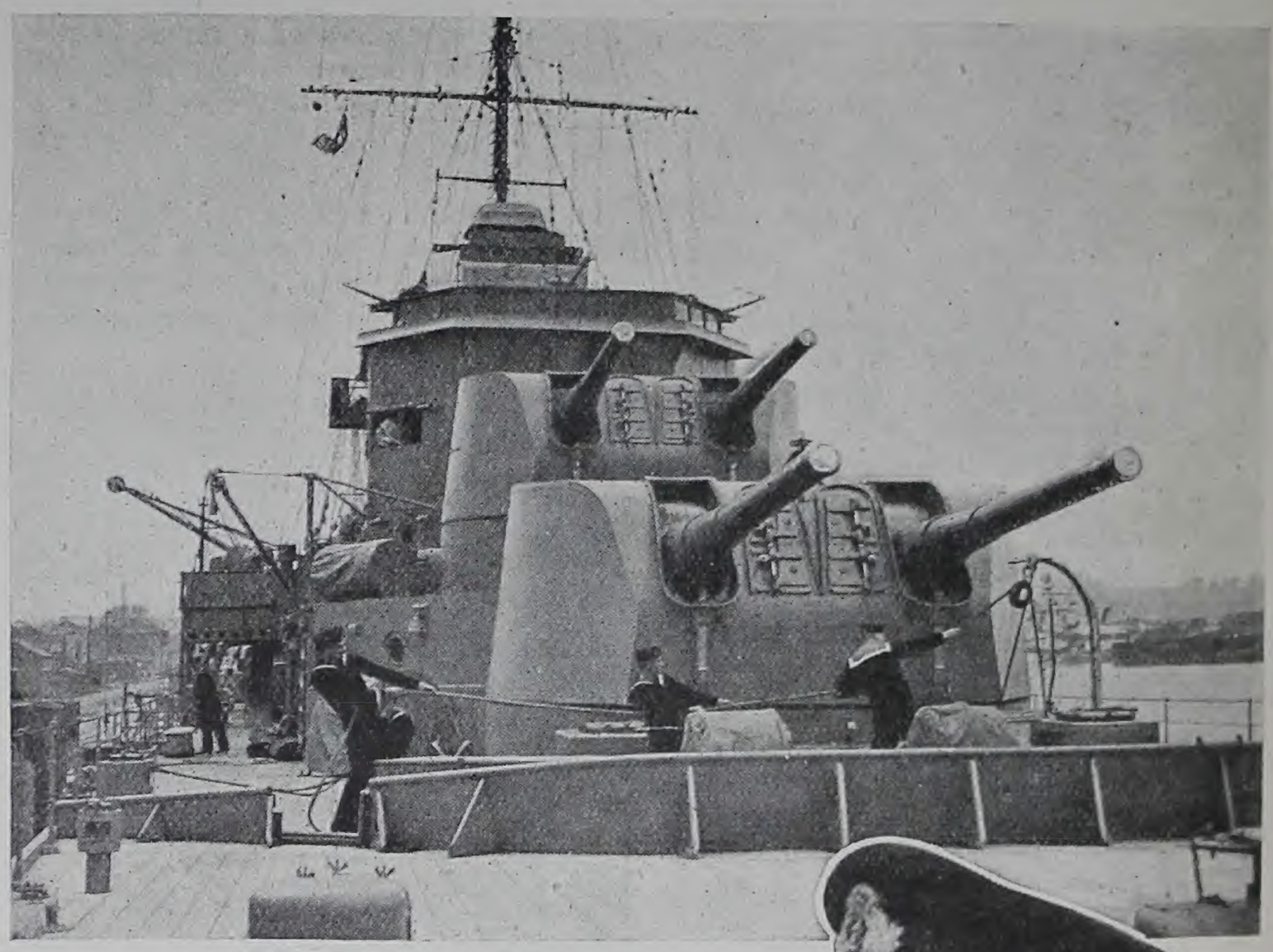


VICTORS OF THE RIVER PLATE

Here are the British cruisers which fought so successful an action against the German battleship "Admiral Graf Spee" off the Uruguayan coast on December 13, 1939. They are: top, H.M.S. "Exeter"; centre, H.M.S. "Achilles," and, bottom, H.M.S. "Ajax." The portraits show: upper left, Captain F. B. Bell of the "Exeter"; lower, Captain W. E. Parry of the "Achilles"; and bottom right, Captain C. H. L. Woodhouse of the "Ajax."

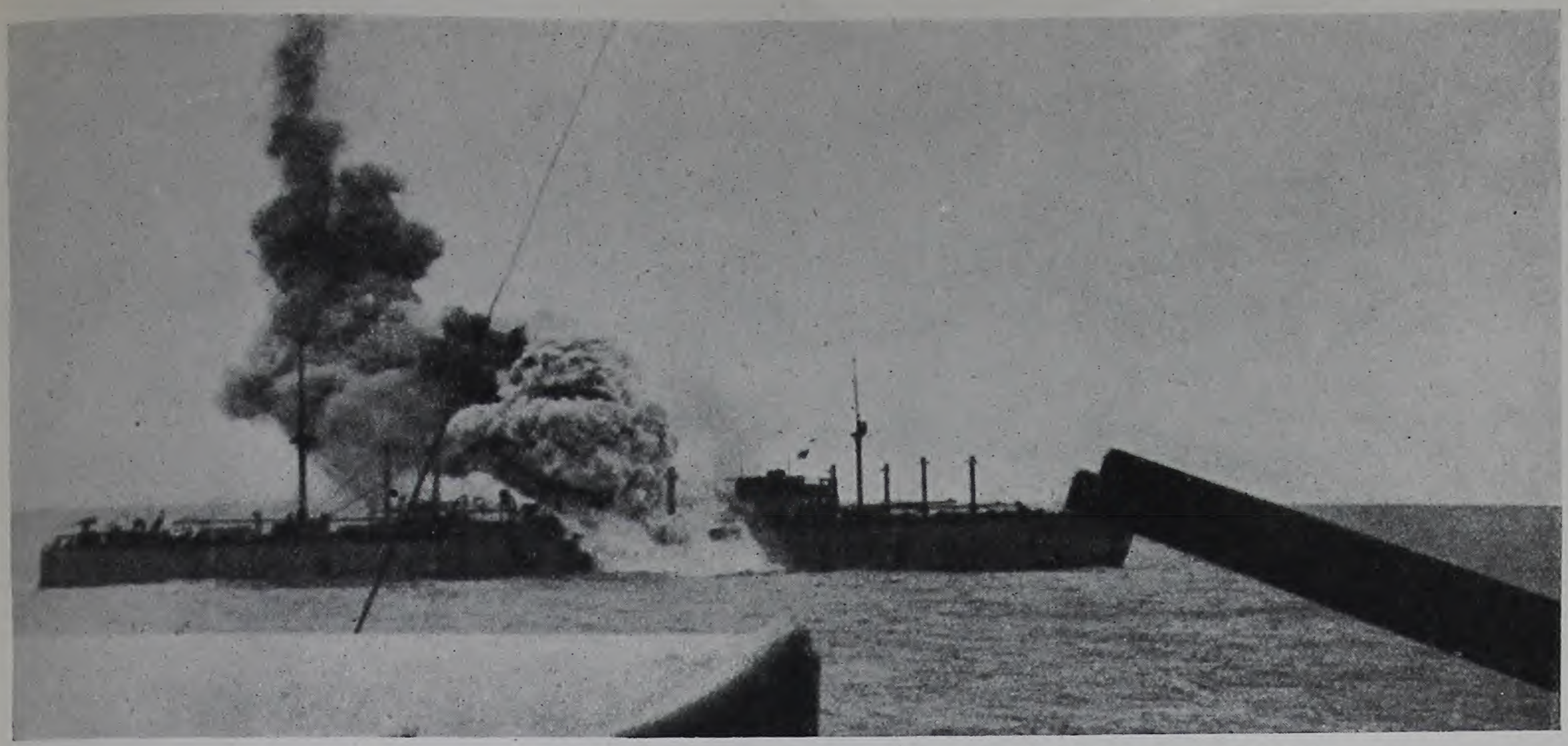
Photos, E. N. Bowditch; Wide World; L.N.A.; Central Press; Sport & General











VICTIM OF A GERMAN BATTLESHIP

Among the British merchant ships which fell victim to the German commerce raider "Admiral Graf Spee" before she reached her inglorious end was the "Doric Star," seen above as she was blown up by a torpedo from the German battleship.

Photo, Planet News

concentration in the early stages was against the "Exeter," which came to within 8,000 yards of the "Graf Spee," and though she exchanged shot for shot, came in for a terrible pounding. Eight of the fifteen Royal Marines manning a forward turret were killed outright by one salvo, and havoc was made of the bridge above. The captain was unscathed, but men around him fell mortally wounded. One by one her guns were put out of action; her steering gear was damaged, her sides and upper works were riddled, and fires broke out.

Her decks were covered with dead and dying; she was becoming increasingly difficult to handle, but she continued to close in and fight, and not until her last gun had ceased to speak did the "Exeter" withdraw from the battle. But her captain and crew had the satisfaction of knowing that they had inflicted most serious damage on her mighty opponent, who at the same time was being harassed by the "Ajax" and "Achilles"; and when on the evening of December 17 the squadron waited for the "Graf Spee" to renew battle, if she would, the gallant "Exeter" was in her place again, ready to help in intercepting her.

Later, remarkable stories of heroism, fortitude and endurance were revealed. A Marine who had lost one arm and had a leg badly injured went from man to man urging them on; he died soon after, perhaps because his splendid efforts had drained him of the vitality needed for recovery. In the engine-room the stokers and others managed to raise full steam in less than a quarter of the time normally required.

It became known that a curious ruse was adopted to mislead the "Graf Spee" as to the effects of her shell-fire. When the flash of the battleship's guns was observed, depth charges were thrown from the "Exeter" in such a manner that the enemy thought his shells were bursting some distance from the cruiser, when, in fact, they were registering on or close to the British warship.

Among the wounded was Commander Robert R. Graham, and when the "Exeter" steamed into Plymouth Sound on February 15, 1940, he still carried in his body fifteen pieces of shell. Of the conduct of his crew, he said:

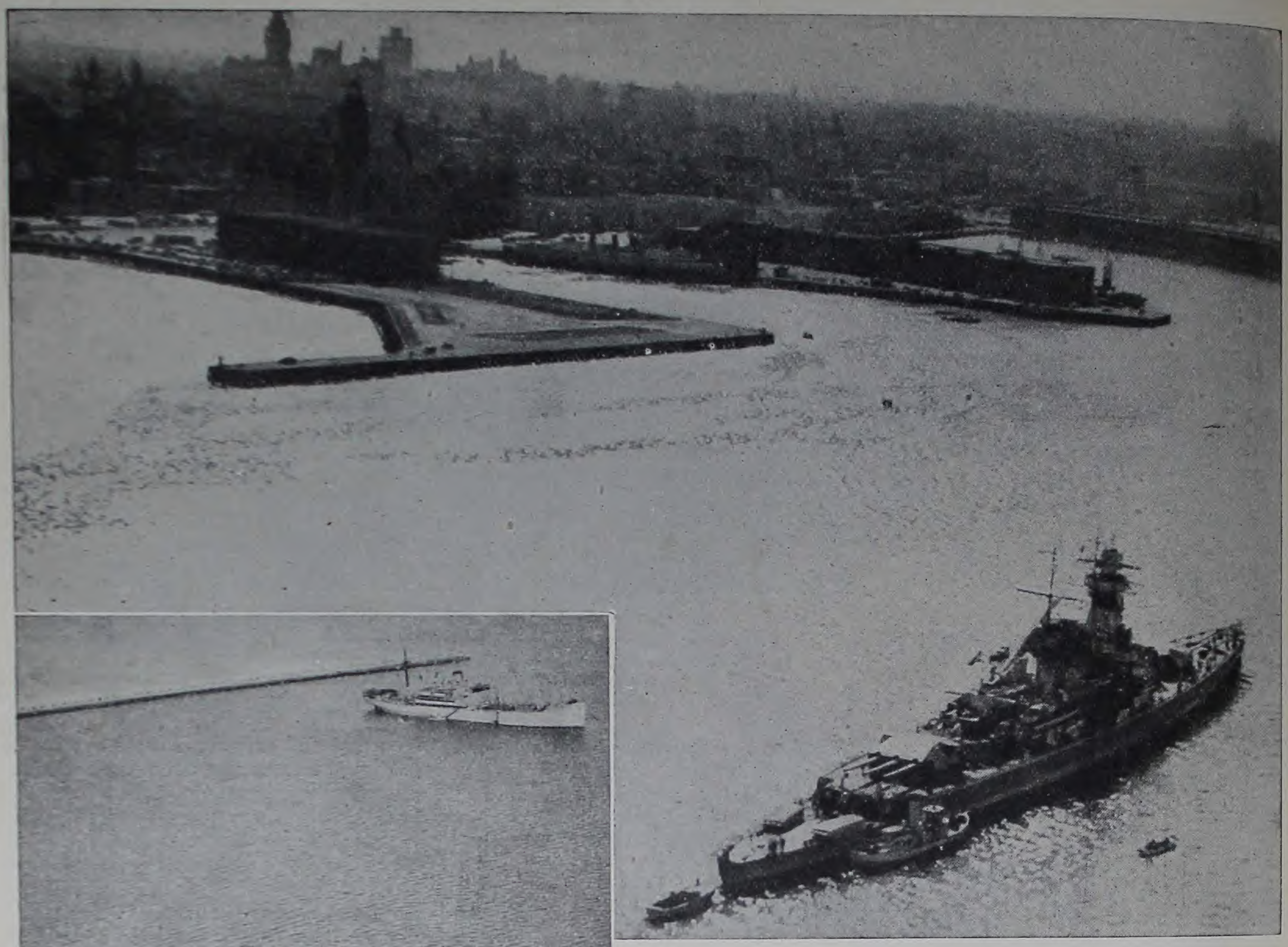
> "My lasting impression of the battle is the way the men behaved, particularly the wounded, who were really magnificent. We expected great things of them, but their behaviour was far more wonderful than ever we could conceive."

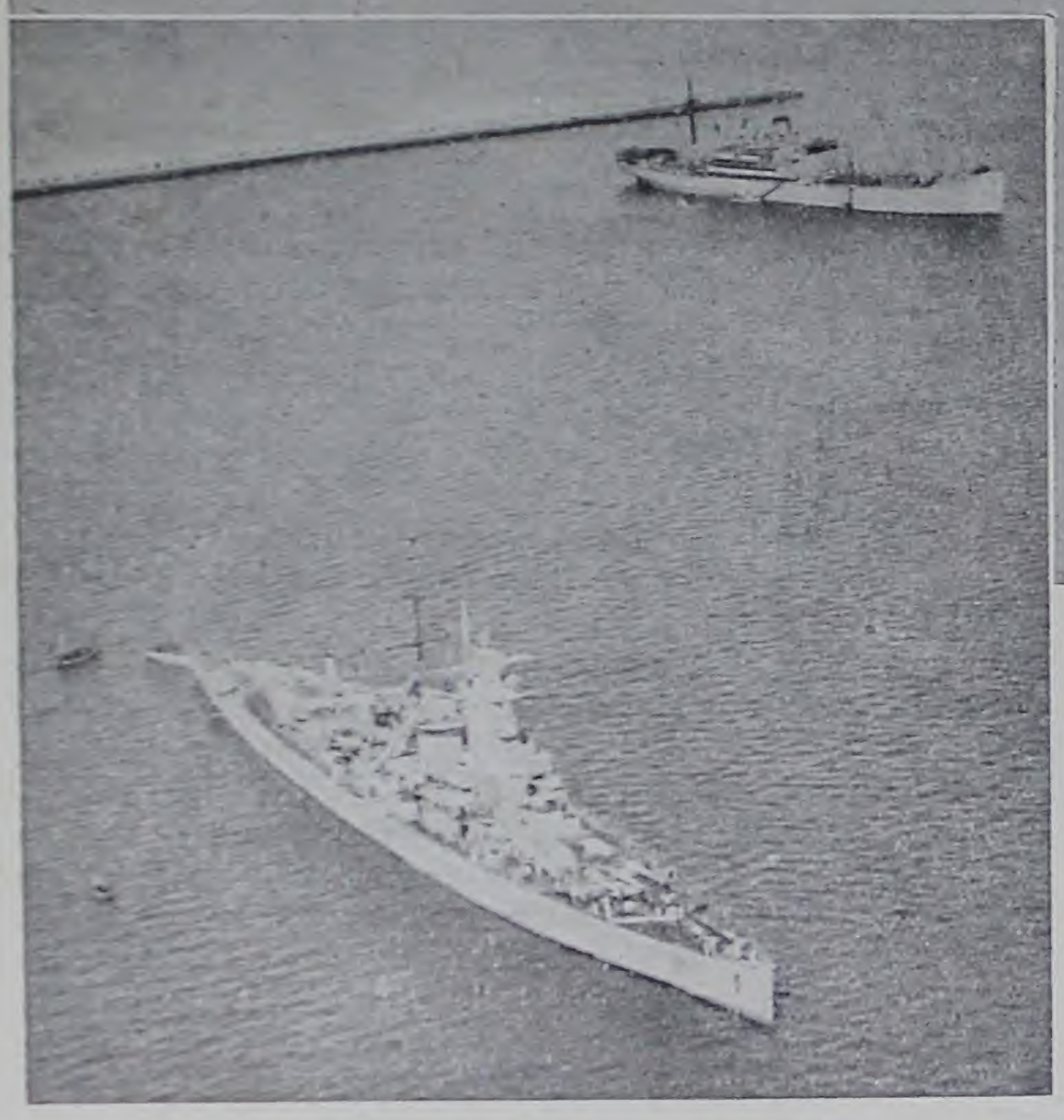
We will now follow the fortunes of the "Ajax" and "Achilles." As soon as the German battleship was sighted they came down on her at full speed, using their much lighter armaments with



NAVAL BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE

In the estuary of the River Plate was enacted the climax of a naval engagement begun in the South Atlantic. Since exact information is not yet available, this diagram is not drawn to scale and merely gives a rough idea of the drama which ended in the scuttling of the "Graf Spee" four miles outside the harbour to which she had fled.





HER LAST REFUGE

On the left the " Admiral Graf Spee " is seen in the outer harbour awaiting permission to enter; the German tanker " Tacoma " is in the background. Above, the German battleship inside the harbour on December 17, 1939, just prior to the departure for her inglorious end.

Photos, Associated Press ; Keystone

great effect. Indeed, so badly damaged was the enemy battleship that it was barely sixteen minutes before she enveloped herself in a series of smoke screens and made for the sanctuary of the River Plate. But the two light cruisers had no intention of letting her go so lightly. All through the day the chase continued, the two cruisers manoeuvring behind their own smoke screens, dashing in to dangerously close quarters and securing hit after hit. So close were they that they could see the effect of their shells and the fires that were caused. They themselves did not escape unscathed. Two turrets of the " Ajax " were put out of action, and the " Achilles " also sustained serious hits.

In little more than an hour it was obvious that the " Graf Spee " had had all the gruelling that she cared for from her tenacious enemies, and desired no more than to be left to pursue her zigzag course under smoke screens to Montevideo harbour. " Ajax " and " Achilles " broke off the close action, went to long range, and watched every movement of the defeated battleship. And so the enemy went like some great wounded beast, snarling defiance at the game terriers who had wounded her, when they again came too near. For when the cruisers came, as she thought, dangerously close during the day, she would let off a salvo at them—but she could never shake them off. The last of these salvoes was fired as the " Graf Spee " was within the River Plate, by this time past nine o'clock in the evening. She was now not far from the harbour of Montevideo itself, from which she was only to emerge to meet her end by scuttling.

An officer of H.M.S. " Ajax," in an account given later to " The Times," said that the " Exeter " was about a mile and a half away from " Ajax," and the " Achilles " was within close range. He thought that the German battleship had spotted the top of the tall masts of the " Exeter " and had assumed that there was only one cruiser to tackle.

" She soon found out, however, that there were three of us," he said, " and opened fire simultaneously on the ' Exeter ' and ourselves. But within a few minutes she began to concentrate her main armament on the ' Exeter,' and with these her firing at first was extremely accurate. Meanwhile, she turned her secondary armament of four 5·9 guns on us, but with those she was not so

GERMAN BATTLESHIP IN LIFE AND DEATH

Above is a photograph of the "Admiral Graf Spee," pride of the German Navy, taken before the war. Now she lies, a battered hulk, in the fairway of Montevideo harbour, where, on December 17, 1939, she was blown up on Hitler's orders rather than face the risks of a naval action. Below, the sad end of this fine ship is exhibited. Clouds of smoke are seen pouring from her as she settles down in shallow water.

Bottom photo, Central Press, exclusive to THE SECOND GREAT WAR



FUNERAL PALL OF THE 'ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE'

So worthy an opponent of the British Navy was Admiral von Spee, who went down with his ship at the Battle of the Falkland Islands in December, 1914, that British sailors felt a touch of sorrow that a ship bearing his name should come to an ignominious end. This column of smoke, 2,000 feet high, was the result of the first explosion as the German battleship "Admiral Graf Spee" was scuttled in the fairway of Montevideo harbour on December 17, 1939.

Photo, Photopress



VICTORIOUS 'ACHILLES' AT BUENOS AIRES

The British cruiser 'Achilles,' which with the 'Ajax' and 'Exeter' took part in the British victory over the German battleship 'Admiral Graf Spee,' received a great welcome when she paid a visit to Buenos Aires on January 3, 1940. A huge crowd lined the docks as the cruiser, seen above flying the New Zealand flag as well as the White Ensign, arrived in the harbour. 'Achilles' is a cruiser of the New Zealand Division, and 380 of her crew were New Zealanders.

Photo, Central Press



LADS WHO CAME THROUGH SMILING

Photo, Sport & General

'Their Lordships are glad to welcome H.M.S. Ajax home, and congratulate you on your safe return after two years' service abroad, culminating in the memorable action against the enemy.' Such was the text of a message sent by the Board of Admiralty to H.M.S. 'Ajax' on her return to Plymouth on January 31, 1940. Here are some members of her crew, delighted to arrive home at last, photographed just after the ship had berthed.

accurate. Occasionally she turned on us with salvoes from the heavy guns, but generally she reserved these for the 'Exeter,' and it was a regular dog fight . . . . As soon as the 'Exeter' dropped out of the action the 'Graf Spee' concentrated on us, but with the 'Achilles' we closed in at break-neck speed at a range of 9,000 yards. We fired four torpedoes and the 'Exeter' had previously fired six. The 'Graf Spee' also fired four at us, but all fourteen missed their mark. As soon as the 'Graf Spee' saw our torpedoes she altered course 150 degrees, and that was the beginning of the chase."

When the "Graf Spee" was lying safe in Montevideo her commander, Captain Langsdorff, made a statement to the Uruguayan authorities in which he disclosed his own experiences and gave his reasons for seeking shelter. He described how he had found himself trapped in a triangle of the British cruisers, and said that even so his only serious worry was lack of fuel. But owing to the extraordinary rapidity of manoeuvre of the cruiser squadron he was soon in a very awkward position, with shallow water to starboard. After his punishment of the "Exeter" the two other cruisers had hit his battleship badly with two broadsides, which damaged the stern and the gun control tower and inflicted heavy casualties. It was then that he made his attempt to escape under a smoke screen, but with "inconceivable audacity" the British commodore had ordered "Ajax" and "Achilles" to close in, which they did by "an incredible manoeuvre," plunging into the smoke screen and pouring their broadsides into both sides of the "Graf Spee." The "Exeter" remained steady on the north side.

By this manoeuvre Captain Langsdorff lost all the advantage of his long range; he was obliged to divide his fire, and it was only his success in securing a hit on the superstructure of the "Ajax" which gave him a pause to break off the action and take to flight. There is ample evidence that both he and his officers were bewildered by the almost impudent pertinacity of their comparatively puny opponents, and by the cruisers' great speed in manoeuvre, which enabled them to dodge backwards and forwards while the battleship was going ahead at full speed.

Skill in Manoeuvre

We have other accounts, too, of experiences in the German battleship, for Captain Langsdorff held as prisoners the captains and crews of nine British merchant vessels which he had sunk during his career as a raider. Among them were Captain Dove of the "Africa Shell," Captain Pottinger of the "Ashlea," Captain Stubbs of the "Doric Star," Captain Brown of the "Huntsman," Captain Edwards of the "Trevanion," and Captain Robison of the "Newton Beech." Their lot was not an enviable one, locked in as they were during the whole day of the battle. However, they kept up their spirits and, as Captain Dove related, "Every time a shot hit us we all said, 'Well hit, sir, that was a good one.'" He described how a shell had burst directly over their heads, smashing the deck above them, and splinters of shell had dropped all around them. They could see through splintered glass that the "Graf Spee" was being chased, for her guns were firing aft and she was steering at full speed in a westerly direction.

About 10 a.m. an officer inquired if they were all right. They said "Yes," but they would like some coffee. There was no coffee to be had, however, for the British shells had wiped out the galley, bakery and storerooms. All they could be given was a meal of black bread with lime juice and water, and this, said Captain Dove, was all the German crew had, too, during that arduous day.

At 9 p.m. the alarm gongs went again, and the imprisoned merchant skippers thought that this surely must be their end and that now the British would close in and send the "Graf Spee" to the bottom. Philosophically, they all went to bed and were mostly asleep when the dramatic climax came:

"At midnight the door opened and an officer woke us up with the words, 'Gentlemen, for you the war is over. We are now in Montevideo harbour.' And that was that.

"One final word: Captain Langsdorff called me into his quarters next morning to congratulate me on my escape, saying: 'When you fight brave men you cannot feel any enmity. You only want to shake hands with them.' I for one was proud to shake the wounded hand of such a gallant gentleman."

Langsdorff was in fact only slightly injured, but of his crew 30 were dead and 60 wounded. His ship was badly battered. One observer noted that she had three shell holes on the water line on the starboard quarter, and a huge hole on the port quarter. Her aeroplanes were completely destroyed, and there was another great hole in her fighting tower. Her decks were covered with debris, and from the water-front her superstructure looked like a mass of twisted iron.

The "Exeter" also had suffered heavy damage and grievous loss of life, with 61 officers and men killed and 23 wounded. "Ajax," which was able to repair her damage at sea, lost seven ratings killed and five wounded.

An interesting account was given by Mr. Archard B. Dixon, a member of the crew of the "Tairoa," sunk by the "Graf Spee" when five days out from Durban, homeward bound from Brisbane. Mr. Dixon was on his way home from New Zealand to join the Royal Air Force. The following extracts are given by permission from the story in the "Daily Telegraph" of February 14, 1940. After the "Tairoa" had been sunk her crew were taken on board the battleship, and all except three wounded men were three days later transferred to the German tanker which refuelled the "Graf Spee." Owing to Mr. Dixon being wounded he remained in hospital on board the battleship, and so, on the fateful December 13, he was in the thick of the mêlée. The rest of the story can best be given in his own words:

Prisoner's Story

"On the morning of December 13 we were wakened at 5.30 by the alarm bells and tumbled out of our hammocks.

"'What's it this time, boys? Another poor old merchant ship?'

"Three long blasts sounded on the siren.

"'That's something new!' We looked at each other with raised eyebrows and listened.

"Suddenly there was a tremendous crash. An 11-inch gun was opening fire astern. A pause, then another crash; a salvo of heavy stuff whistled astern.

"'It's the British Navy this time, boys!'

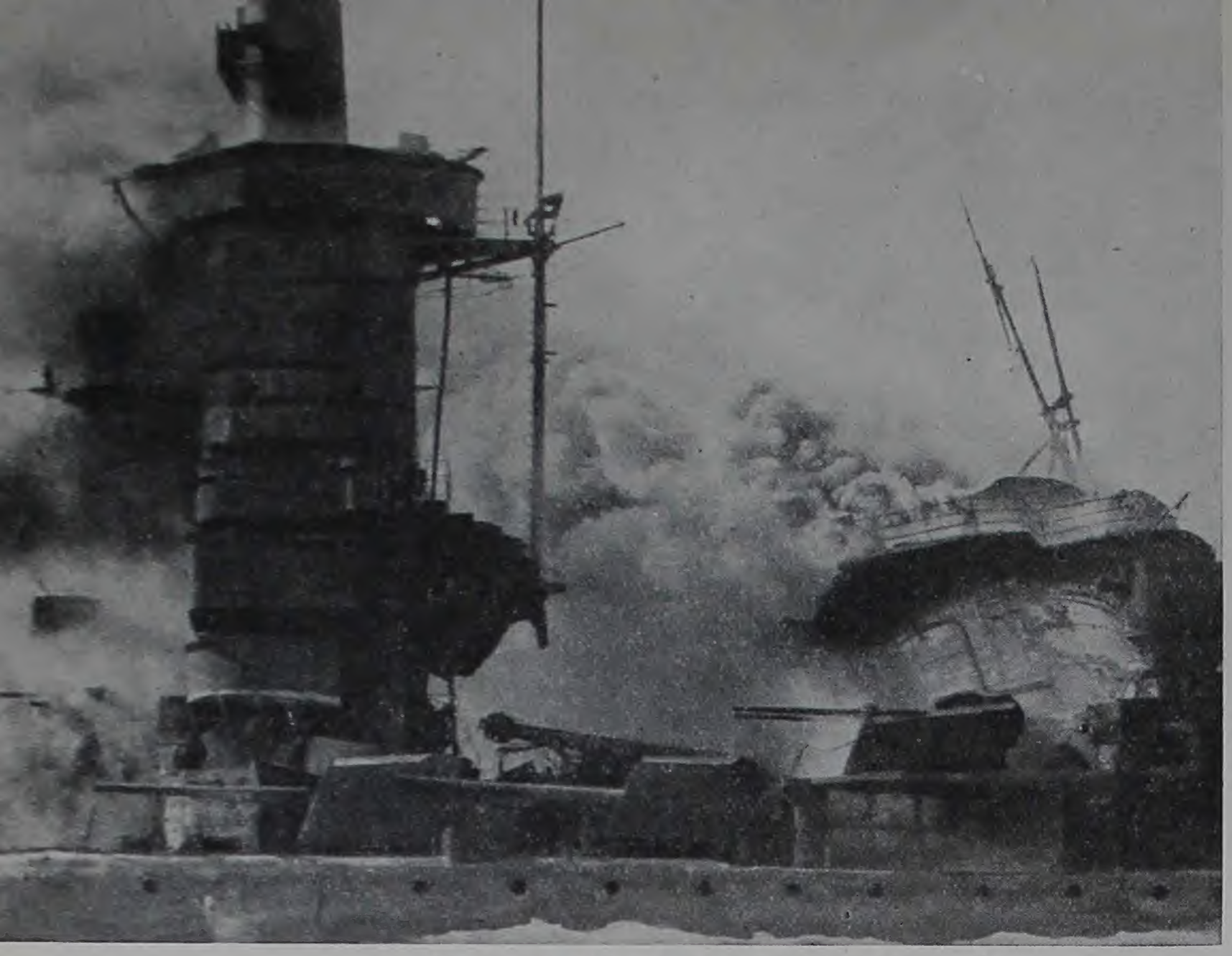
"And so it was. The guns thundered above us, and we heeled over as the Graf Spee began to zigzag. A shudder ran through her as she was hit for'ard. We realized that we were being engaged by more than one ship as we were firing on both sides. It was hopeless to worry about being blown up. If a direct hit got the magazine below us, we should know nothing whatever about it.

"Through three rivet-holes we could watch the guards outside hauling up shells from the magazine below us, all wearing their gas masks. We also saw them carrying the first wounded down from the decks. Through the skylight came reflected the glare from the ship's seaplane which had caught fire. Through a chink in the skylight's steel shutter we could see that it was a fine sunny day with cloudless blue sky.

"It may occur to English readers to wonder why the sailors were wearing gas masks. It was a routine regulation; they used them for protection from the fumes of explosives. The rumour that gas shells had been used by the British originated because the Germans had sprayed a powerful new disinfectant over the decks and the corpses. It had such a strong odour that it even penetrated our locked wardroom. The German doctor who came on board at Montevideo may have mistaken the odour for the fumes of gas and spread the gas shell rumour, which was soon utterly discredited.

"At 10.10 I was in the bathroom washing and an officer was shaving, when crash! a shell landed on our bulkhead and put the lights out. Shell splinters were sprayed round the wardroom and one slightly wounded one of my mates. During a lull in the afternoon the master-at-arms, whom we had nicknamed 'Jericho,' came in to inspect the damage. He picked up a fragment and said with a grin, 'Made in England, ja?'

"At lunch we could not have coffee as the cook's galley had been hit, but weak lime



A FINE SHIP'S SHAMEFUL END

Taken from a motor-boat close to the ' Admiral Graf Spee ' at the moment when she was scuttled off Montevideo, the impressive photograph above shows the shattered superstructure wreathed in dense smoke after violent explosions had taken place aboard the ship. On the right, one of the German sailors wounded in the battle of the River Plate is being taken ashore at Montevideo.

Photos, Central Press (Exclusive to THE SECOND GREAT WAR) *; Keystone*

juice was served with the eternal sausage and black bread. It fell quiet during the afternoon and we began to think we had got away from the British ships, but in the evening we opened fire again. They must have done some excellent shooting, for the ' Graf Spee ' got badly knocked about. In the evening the ' Achilles ' and ' Ajax ' closed, and only by skilfully turning the stern to them did Captain Langsdorff save his ship. . . .

" Another lull and we went to bed, thinking we should probably escape the British in the dark, but at 9.45 p.m. our eleven-inch gun fired again. There were three deliberate shots. The last, at 10.15, closed the action. I dropped off to sleep, but at 12.30 was awakened by the ship's vibration as she went astern. In came the Lieutenant-Commander. ' Gentlemen,' he said, ' you are free. We are at Montevideo. It is my turn to be a prisoner ! ' "

Commander's Dilemma

The whole world now became tense with interest over the German captain's immediate problem. As commander of a belligerent vessel in a neutral port there were three choices before him (if, indeed, he had any personal authority in the matter, which is extremely doubtful)—alternatives which he might ponder during the breathing space which, under international law, he could claim in order to make his ship seaworthy. He could not, of course, claim the time necessary to make her fighting fit again. He was given in fact 72 hours to clear the port, and it was perhaps unfortunate for him that the Uruguayan people were distinctly unsympathetic to the Nazi regime and were not very ready with practical assistance. His choice, therefore, lay between submitting to internment for the duration of the war, coming out to fight the enemy again, or scuttling the ship. He chose the last—or, it was forced upon him—an ignominious course which all the circumstances of his final tragedy show must have been utterly repugnant to him.

This is not the place to discuss why Hitler and his staff gave or acceded to this order, the carrying out of which was followed by a wave of disgust which must have found an echo among the German people. There was some justification for the belief that it showed a weakening of Germany's confidence in final victory. For if that confidence existed, why destroy a valuable ship which would be returned to a victorious Germany after the war was over ? As to the decision not to fight again, it will be remembered that, though " Ajax " and " Achilles " had been reinforced by the cruiser " Cumberland," the battle cruiser " Renown " and the aircraft carrier " Ark Royal " were still 1,000 miles away refuelling at Rio. According to the best-informed naval opinion the " Graf Spee " might have had an excellent chance of escape in the dark.

But on the evening of Sunday, December 17, Captain Langsdorff steamed out to scuttle his battleship, going to a position just outside the three-mile limit but dangerously near the channel used by shallow-draught vessels plying between Montevideo and Buenos Aires. His crew were transferred to tugs and other vessels which made for the Argentine port, and from boats which anchored at a safe distance the fuses were fired which sent to the bottom one of the proudest ships of the German Navy. Colossal explosions were heard and vast sheets of flame seen from the shore as the " Graf Spee "



broke up, to remain, until finally dynamited, a menace to peaceful shipping. Little wonder that this inglorious end recalled to British minds that fight against hopeless odds, still in recent memory, of the armed liner " Rawalpindi." Naturally the German representatives made protests. They accused the Uruguayan Government of not allowing the German ship sufficient time to effect her repairs, a charge which the Uruguayans quickly and effectively countered. The Germans also launched a campaign of lies which redounded more severely to their discredit in neutral countries than any which had preceded it.

WHERE BRITISH SHELLS GOT HOME

On the left can be seen the results of raking shell-fire from one of the British cruisers on the hull of the 'Admiral Graf Spee.' Below (left) the circles mark where British shells tore their way through the steelwork of the control tower. On the right is a gaping rent in the side of the German battleship where a British shell struck.

Photos, Keystone; Sport & General

Two charges made against their enemies were too crude to need refuting. The first was that the British had used mustard gas shells against the "Graf Spee." The British Navy had no mustard gas shells, and even the meanest intelligence must have realized that, in an action in which the chief —indeed, the only— object was to destroy the ship and not the personnel, to carry gas shells of any sort would have been a sheer waste of capacity. In any case, the doctor who attended the wounded disproved the story. The other calumny was that the British representatives at the funeral of the German victims had spat on the graves and otherwise dishonoured them. This foul lie raised the most violent indignation in Montevideo, whose people had witnessed the reverent attendance of the British captains at the graveside and the German commander's grateful salute of acknowledgement of their presence.

Gas Lie Disproved

In Germany itself the battle was first hailed as a great victory. The Germans were told that England's sea route to South America had been destroyed and that a British convoy had been defeated. The presence of the "Graf Spee" in Montevideo harbour was explained by the silly lie that mustard gas had contaminated the provisions, which had to be replaced. For some days the Germans were allowed to celebrate their triumph. Then came the bare announcement of the scuttling, which must have come as an anti-climax so rude and abrupt that even that docile people must have entertained doubts about the accuracy of their earlier information.

Captain Langsdorff had saved the lives of some 1,000 of his crew, who must now submit to internment for the remainder of the war. His supply ship, the "Tacoma," was also treated as a vessel of war and interned. But for him life had finished. He very deliberately set about making his last dispositions. On the evening of December 19, five days after the action, he spent three hours in consultation with his staff officers. He wrote his last letters and dispatches, and gave away his more valuable personal effects. On the following morning he was found dead in his quarters, shot by his own hand. What was passing in this unfortunate man's mind can only be conjectured, but there seems little doubt that his decision to share the fate of his ship arose from the deep chagrin which he felt in not having been allowed to fight to a finish. There were whispers that his crew were mutinous. This may or may not have been serious, but his friends on the spot asserted that it was Langsdorff's resentment against the ignoble order which he had received from Berlin that led him to his fatal decision.

HE WOULD NOT SURVIVE HIS SHIP

On the right is Captain Hans Langsdorff, commander of the 'Admiral Graf Spee,' who paid tribute to the 'inconceivable audacity' of the British cruisers which attacked him. The German battleship was scuttled by Hitler's order on December 17, 1939, and three days later Captain Langsdorff, unwilling to survive his ship, committed suicide. Below, members of the German colony at Buenos Aires are seen giving the Nazi salute at his funeral.

Photos, Planet News ; Keystone

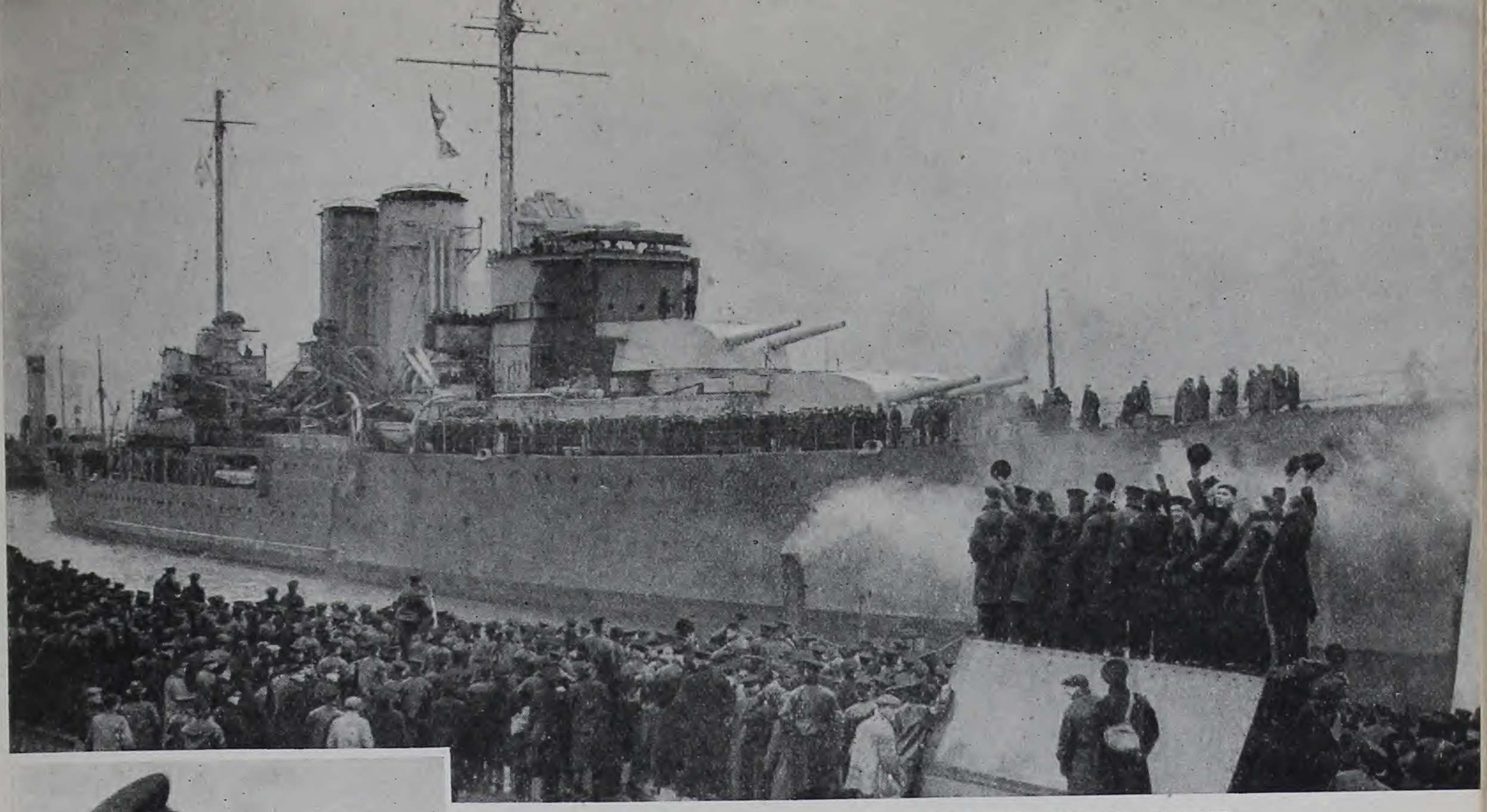


The gallantry of Commodore Harwood and his captains was speedily recognized. The Commodore was promoted Rear-Admiral and awarded the K.C.B. His three captains were appointed C.B. Not very long afterwards Admiral Sir Henry Harwood, in the "Ajax," paid a courtesy visit to Montevideo, where he and his men were received with the greatest enthusiasm and hospitality. In a broadcast speech the Admiral added one or two details to the earlier accounts of the battle. He spoke for the first time of the heroism of the pilot and observer of a seaplane on board the "Ajax," who sat calmly in the machine when it was catapulted off the deck while the cruiser was moving at full speed with all her guns firing. This coolness, he said, was truly remarkable. When a shell killed a number of the crew of "Achilles," survivors took over the duties of the dead, working among "the human wreckage around" as effectively as before.



When a shell fell in his own sleeping quarters, the survivors picked themselves up and took immediate measures to prevent an explosion of ammunition. Sir Henry paid tribute to Captain Woodhouse and the officers and men of the "Ajax" for the gallant and resolute way in which they fought. He also thanked the Commander-in-Chief and senior officers, "who since the last war have trained us all so that when it came to the test we were able to uphold the glorious traditions of the British Navy."

H.M.S. "Ajax" came into Plymouth early on Wednesday, January 31, 1940.



PRIDE OF THE WEST COUNTRY COMES HOME

Cheering crowds welcomed H.M.S. ' Exeter ' when she steamed into Plymouth, her home port, on February 15, 1940, and no one cheered more lustily than Mr. Winston Churchill, seen, left, with Admiral Sir M. Dunbar-Nasmith, V.C., C.-in-C. of the Western Approaches. The First Lord said : ' You have come back with your honours gathered and with your duty done.'

Photos, Topical Press ; Associated Press



She was welcomed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Western Approaches, Admiral Sir Martin Dunbar-Nasmith. The Admiralty telegraphed :

" Their Lordships are glad to welcome H.M.S. ' Ajax ' home, and congratulate you on your safe return after two years' service abroad, culminating in the memorable action against the enemy. They hope that you all will soon enjoy a well-earned leave."

An official welcome was given to H.M.S. " Exeter " when she steamed into Plymouth Sound on February 15, 1940, after one of the longest commissions on record—it had begun in December, 1936, and the crew had had only five days' leave in England during all this time. The First Lord was among the first to greet the returning heroes, and with him were Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound (First Sea Lord) and Sir John Simon.

Mr. Churchill in a stirring speech said :

" Captain, officers, and men of the ' Exeter '—and let me say my words also apply to your comrades in the ' Ajax '—we are here today to welcome you home.

" In this sombre dark winter when, apart from the Navy, we have been at war and yet not at war, in these long months when we have had to watch the agony of Poland and now of Finland, the brilliant action of the Plate, in which you took a memorable part, came like a flash of light and colour on the scene, carrying with it encouragement to all who are fighting . . . and the cause of rejoicing to free men and free people . . . .

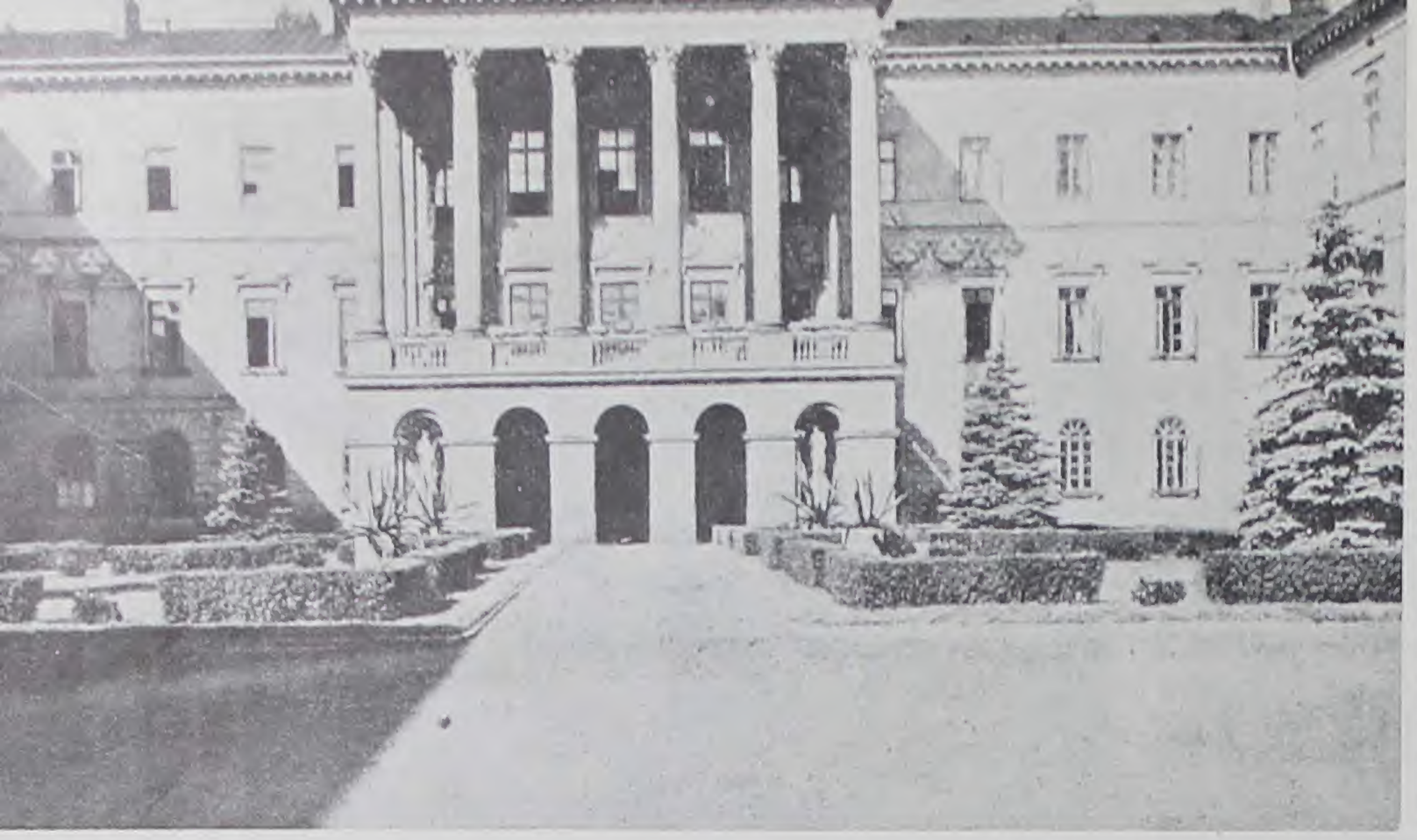
" Officers and men . . you have come back with work notably and faithfully accomplished in a worthy cause, with your honours gathered and with your duty done."



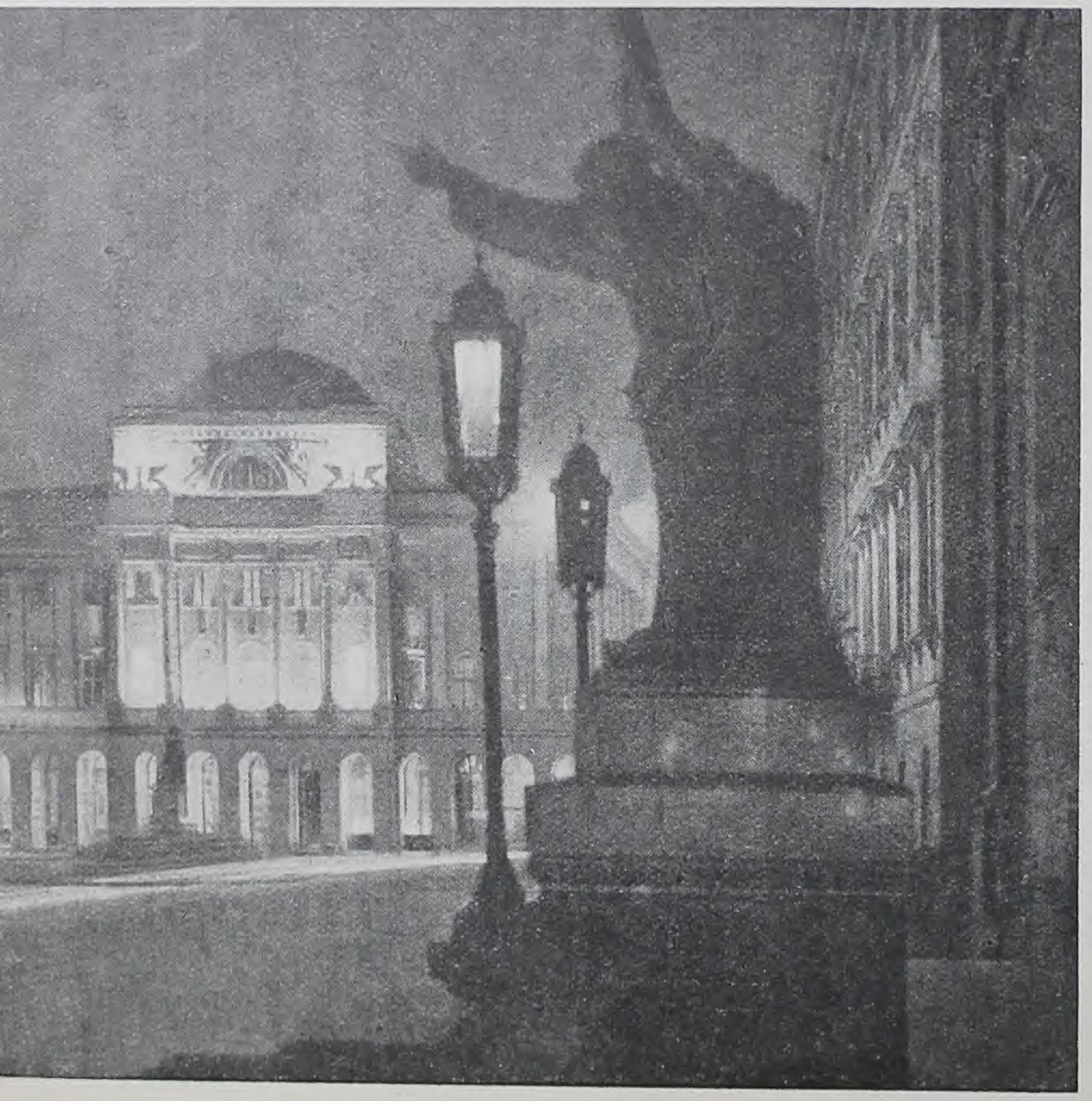
ANOTHER BATTLE-HONOUR FOR THE ' AJAX '

To the list of battle-honours won by warships of the British Navy bearing the name ' Ajax ' is now added another, " The Plate, 1939," in commemoration of the naval action off Montevideo on December 13, 1939.

Photo, Sport & General









GLORIES OF WARSAW BEFORE AND AFTER WAR

Warsaw possessed many magnificent buildings, most of which now lie in ruins, mute evidence of Nazi ruthlessness. Top pictures, the Ministry of Finance building as it was and as it is. Left is the famous Staszic Place as it was before the war, seen from Thorwaldsen's statue of Christ. On the right is Staszic Place after the bombardment, showing the wrecked Home Office building.

Photos, Fox; Keystone; S.A.C.

Chapter 46

POLAND, VICTIM OF NAZI SAVAGERY: THREE MONTHS OF GERMAN RULE

Nazi Lust for Inflicting Misery—General Sikorski's Revelations—'We Are Masters,' Bragged the Germans—How the Reich Dealt With the Newly-Acquired Territories—Horrors of the Reststaat—Albert Forster on the Nazi 'Revenge'—Compulsory Labour for the Conquered—Mass Executions

IN that "register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind" which we know as History, it is difficult to find pages rivalling in wickedness and horror those which bear the record of the Nazis in Poland in the months immediately following their lightning conquest of September, 1939. To read of the murders and executions, the ejections and transfers of population, the rape and the plunder and the burnings, the violation of every human instinct, the complete and utter disregard for the fundamental decencies of civilized life—to read of these things is to be reminded of the worst and darkest ages in mankind's long and laborious struggle upwards from the slime. For the Nazi conquerors there is not, indeed, a shred of excuse, and the mantle which kindly historians have flung over the bloodstained criminals of the past will be denied their shoulders. Professing to be the exponents of a new and better civilization, they drowned an innocent people in blood and converted a peaceful land into a smoking shambles.

Reports of the methods of warfare employed by the Germans in Poland had shocked the whole world, said General Sikorski, Prime Minister of the Polish Government in exile, in a broadcast statement on November 30; never before had an enemy treated a defenceless population with so much ruthlessness, raining down upon cities and villages alike bombs, shells and machine-gun bullets. It might have been expected that as soon as the country was subjugated this lust for inflicting misery would have ceased, but, said the General, the contrary was the case. "Reports that fill us with horror are coming in from all those parts of our country which are now under German occupation; while the military authorities declaim phrases about honour, and the administration talk willingly and eloquently about culture, order and justice, the Gestapo and the S.S. detachments are the rulers. Hardly a day passes without collective as well as individual executions being carried out in Warsaw and in the districts of Poznan, Bydgoszcz, Gdynia, Katowice, and Cracow. Property is being confiscated. Owners with their families are being evicted from their homes, and the entire population is being driven from vast Polish areas. Destruction of human life has become the pastime of savage and bestial hangmen.

Savage Cruelty

"Never before in modern history, even during the fiercest wars, have such gloomy events occurred as are now occurring daily in Poland. In all districts of Western Poland leading citizens are being shot and their names whispered throughout the horrified country. During a single day all the professors of the ancient University of Cracow were arrested and deported to Germany. These, however, are only the most glaring instances of acts of violence that are being committed during the incessant and general oppression of millions of people."

At a later date, said the Premier, the Polish Government would issue an official account of the cruelties that had been perpetrated in Poland; but in the meantime they felt it incumbent upon them to make the following solemn declaration: "The soil of Poland under German domination has become the soil of martyrdom. National-Socialist savagery is writing a new and ominous page in the history of German cruelty, which by its slaughter of the helpless surpasses even the darkest memories of the past.

Back To Barbarism

The spirit of conquest and robbery which marked the march of Germany throughout centuries in blood and destruction has come to life again and is sowing its seeds of ruin and crime."

In the light of such revelations it was obvious that the Nazis' object in that portion of Poland which was so unfortunate as to fall into their clutches, was the elimination of every element of Polish culture and national feeling. They intended that Poland should never again rise from the dead, as she had triumphed over the grave into which imperialist plotters of the 18th century had thrust her. Where Prussia, Austria and Russia

CONQUERORS IN COMFORT

The bitter cold which extended over the whole of Europe during the winter of 1939-40 was particularly distressing to the conquered Poles, many of whom were homeless and without sufficient clothing. But these German sentries at Cracow could smile at the sufferings of the victims of Nazi aggression, for they were well wrapped up in sheepskin coats.

Photo, Keystone



POLES RETURN HOME

After the Polish campaign had ended and another partition had divided the country between Nazis and Russians, many Polish people, like the woman and child above, returned to the homes from which the approach of war had driven them—those, that is, who were fortunate enough to have a home left. But they came back as slaves of another nation.

Photo, International Graphic Press

combined had failed, now the Nazis were resolved to succeed.

In their own country, in the land where their fathers had dwelt for generations, the land for which they had just risked their lives on the battlefield, the Poles were to be henceforth strangers and outcasts; they were to be reduced to the status of slaves. "We are masters," bragged Herr Uebelhoer, head of the Nazi district administration in Lodz, "as masters we must behave. The Pole is a servant here, and must only serve. Blind obedience and ruthless fulfilment of orders must be enforced. No sentiment is permissible and no exceptions, no consideration even for any particular Poles whom we know and esteem. We must inject a dose of iron into our spinal columns and never admit the idea that Poland may ever rise again. Be hard! Remember what the Poles have done to us and our kinsmen, and then you will always find the proper way to treat those who do not belong to us and by your deeds show yourselves worthy of our Fuehrer and the great German Reich."

To convince the Poles that their national glory had indeed departed, and departed for ever, the Nazis set about the deliberate destruction of the monuments which national pride and piety had caused to be erected to the memory of the men Poland delighted to honour. Thus the Kosciusko monument in Liberty Square (now renamed Adolf-Hitler Platz) at Lodz was destroyed; the monument in Cracow commemorating the 500th anniversary of the victory of the forces of Poland and Lithuania over the Teutonic Knights at Grünewald, and the monument of national thanksgiving to Christ the King at Poznan, shared the same fate. President Wilson's statue was removed from the Botanical Gardens in Poznan, and at Gniezno the Nazi iconoclasts smashed the monument of King Boleslaw. The statue of Copernicus, the world-famous Polish astronomer, was to be taken away from Warsaw, for the Nazi triumph had at last settled the long-standing controversy between Polish and German scholars: henceforth Copernicus was German.

Next the Nazis proceeded to tear up the landmarks and redraw the boundary lines of the conquered state.

Nationalities in German and Soviet Occupied Territories

	German Occupation	Soviet Occupation
Poles	18,181,000	5,570,000
Ukrainians.. ..	200,000	4,867,000
Jews	1,980,000	1,160,000
White Russians..	—	1,914,000
Germans	757,000	95,000
Lithuanians ..	—	70,000
Others (Russians, Czechs, etc.) ..	82,000	124,000

By the partition agreed upon in the autumn of 1939 of Poland's 390,000 sq. kilometres the Third Reich appropriated approximately 187,000 square kilometres, while Soviet Russia secured 203,000 sq. k. The populations of the two areas were estimated to be 21,200,000 and 13,800,000 respectively. Thus, though Russia's share of territory was rather more than half, the population accruing to her was much less. Nevertheless, Stalin's acumen might be vindicated by the fact that the Polish element among his new citizens was



PROPAGANDA HANDSHAKE

As soon as the demarcation line was fixed marking the boundaries of Russian and German Poland, sentries were posted along the new frontier. Above, a Nazi and a Soviet frontier guard are seen shaking hands for the benefit of the photographer.

Photo, Planet News







REIGN OF TERROR FOR WARSAW JEWS

The photographs in this page, smuggled out of Warsaw, show : above, Jews ordered by the Nazis to undertake dangerous demolition work ; left, Warsaw Jews pointing out (according to a Berlin paper) to Nazi S.S. men where arms have been hidden in a Polish soldier's grave ; right, an aged Jew being arrested by Nazis ; below, Warsaw Jews, labelled with a triangle of yellow cloth, are not allowed to walk on pavements reserved for Aryans.

Photos, " Daily Telegraph & Morning Post " ; Wide World ; Keystone





BACK INTO HITLER'S CLUTCHES

After the partition of Poland the Germans living in the Soviet-occupied territory were transferred to the Reich. Above, a party of these uprooted Germans is crossing the border at Hrubieszow. The left-hand figure on the right is Dr. Seyss-Inquart, Deputy Governor-General of German-occupied Poland, photographed at Hrubieszow.

Photos, Planet News

outnumbered by the Ukrainians and White Russians, whereas Hitler added to the already considerable alien minorities in the Reich a great mass of potential dissentients.

Early in October Germany set about the redistribution of her newly-acquired territory. The three Polish voivodships or provinces of Pomerania, Poznania, and Silesia were forthwith incorporated in the Reich as the "Reichsgebiet" (Reich region); the first two were transformed into "Reichsgaue" (Reich provinces) under the names of Westpreussen and Posen, with their respective capitals at Danzig and Poznan. Polish Silesia was added to the already existing "Gau Schlesiau" (German Silesia). Although the Nazi propagandists claimed that the three voivodships were "urdeutsch," i.e. German-for-ages, of their population of more than five millions less than 400,000, or only 7 per cent, were Germans according to the 1931 census.

Organizing the Spoil

The rest of Nazi-occupied Poland—that is, the central districts—were designated the "Reststaat," which was at first assumed to be destined to enjoy "autonomy." In the course of a few weeks, however, mentions of autonomy became ever fewer, and the Reststaat was diminished by the cession of Lodz and the surrounding area to the Reichsgebiet—in effect, the German Reich. At the same time Suwalki, wedged between East Prussia, Lithuania and the new Soviet frontier, was added to the first (Gau Ostpreussen), and some slight adjustments were made on the old Czechoslovak frontier. By these additions the Reichsgebiet gained 17,000 sq. kilometres with a population of 2,110,000.

In the Reichsgebiet the work of Germanization was soon embarked upon with the utmost vigour. The object of the new rulers was nothing less than the substitution of a German population for that which was established in the land. There could be no question of peaceful infiltration, for the territories which, according to the German press, were to be colonized by 4,000,000 Germans, were just those provinces of Poland which were already most thickly populated, indeed over-populated. It was obvious, therefore, that the German administration was planning nothing less than the expropriation of the indigenous Polish population, that a great host of Polish peasants and shopkeepers were to be hounded from their homes and sent to (presumably) the Reststaat, to make room for a collection

of immigrants drawn from distant corners of the Reich and "brought home" from the Baltic States.

Significant in this connexion was the speech of Albert Forster, the newly-appointed Reichsstatthalter of West Prussia, at a meeting of the German-speaking population in Torun. "Our country," he said, referring to Pomorze, "is beautiful and fertile, but there have been too few of us living in it. Now that Germans from other countries are flocking here our numbers will increase. We Germans will take revenge for all that Poles have done to us. In a few years' time Polish will no longer be heard in the streets of this town. We shall never repeat our old mistake of being guided by toleration and sentimentality. We shall act ruthlessly." These words could presage nothing less than a vast process of expropriation and extermination of the land-owning and land-occupying classes.

Additional light on the conquerors' intentions was thrown by Dr. Hans Frank, who took up his duties as Governor-General of the Reststaat in Cracow on November 11—Poland's Independence Day. At his installation ceremony he gave further proof of his complete lack of tact by descanting in the Royal Chamber of the Wawel Castle on the "barbarous persecution" to which, he told the assembled Poles, the Germans in former Poland had been subjected. He concluded his oration with an appeal to the Poles to collaborate with Greater Germany, not forgetting to point out that severe punishment lay in store for those who dared to show a recalcitrant spirit or ventured to engage in any measure of sabotage. "All who oppose our creative work are doomed to perish, but those who help may live quietly and work."

Dr. Frank's Menaces

It was in this intransigent spirit that he issued his first decrees. In all a sharp distinction was drawn between the German section of the population, who were accorded privileges of many kinds, and the native Poles, who were stigmatized as belonging to an inferior and permanently subject race. Henceforth there were to be different laws for the German and Polish inhabitants, and misdeeds which, committed by the one, might be glossed over, if committed by the other would almost certainly be visited with severe penalties. Dual police control was instituted, German citizens being subject only to the German police, while the Polish police were made responsible to the German authorities for maintaining order amongst the Poles.

Another of the Governor-General's decrees introduced compulsory labour for the whole of the Polish population, men and women, between the ages of 17 and 45. "Every able-bodied person must work," it was laid down, so that the Poles should be given an opportunity "not only of learning the blessings of labour, but also of pulling themselves together at last, to carry out what the irresponsible Polish Government failed to do in twenty years of mismanagement."

With so vast a supply of cheap labour available, the Nazi administrators looked forward with every confidence to securing from the conquered soil vast quantities of raw materials which would be of the utmost service to the Reich in time of war, and this despite the fact that several hundred thousands of able-bodied Polish peasants, for the most part prisoners of war, had been transported into the interior of Germany to work as serfs on the German farms.

The deeds of the conquerors did not belie their inspiration; never did they fall short of the resolve to "be hard." Though as far as might be the excesses were hidden from the wider world, news sometimes leaked out, and so the counts in the ever-lengthening indictment of Nazi rule accumulated.

One incident that attracted particular attention was the arrest (referred to in General Sikorski's statement in page 489) of the professors and lecturers of Cracow University on the ground that they left the lecture-hall when a German professor reviled in the most extravagant terms Polish science and Polish scholars. Taken at once to the military barracks, they were eventually deported to Germany and interned in a concentration camp. This act of violence aroused widespread indignation, and the universities of Britain expressed their deep concern for the imprisoned scholars. "The abrupt and compulsory stoppage of all their researches and their teaching," said the Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University, to quote but one of the many messages of sympathy, "would alone be enough to condemn the agents of the stoppage as uncivilized; but the callous personal inhumanity with which it has been carried out shows its perpetrators not merely as uncivilized but as active enemies of civilization."

Savants Imprisoned

The treatment of the Cracow professors was mild compared with the fate of thousands of their fellow-countrymen. In the single province of Poznan some five thousand persons were reported to have been executed, individually or in the mass—persons of every rank and class and occupation who were found guilty of the unforgivable crime of patriotism. Clergy and workers' leaders, landowners and peasants—all, indeed, who stood out against the brutal



TO BE PUT TO OTHER USES

After their conquest of Poland the Nazis set up collecting stations to which was sent the war material captured on the battlefields. Above is a dump of Polish steel helmets which will probably be melted down and turned into some form of armament for the Nazis.

Photo, E.N.A.

conduct of the Nazis—were rushed before the military tribunals, and after a night in a cell exposed to every form of barbarity, dispatched by the firing-squad. By the end of the year 18,000 of the nation's leaders had paid for their patriotism with their life-blood. Those who were not shot out of hand were marked men, watched day and night by the spies of the Gestapo; some were seized as hostages for the good behaviour of their colleagues or fellow-townsfolk.

At Gdynia 300 of the 350 hostages seized when the port was occupied by the Nazis were shot in batches without even the slightest suggestion of a trial. It was reported that before being murdered the doomed men were forced to dig their own graves, and then the executioners of the Gestapo shot them one by one, while the victims-to-be were compelled to look on at the slaughter until their turn came.

More hostages were slain at Szamotuly, a little town in Poznania—five young Poles who had been taken because in a neighbouring village the Nazi flag had been torn down. The men responsible for the "insult" could not be found, so these five were publicly shot on market-day in the market-place. With their last breath they shouted "Long live Poland!" S.S. men finished them off with their revolvers as they lay on the ground, and then several Polish professional men were ordered to place the bodies in a lorry, take them to a spot outside the cemetery, and there dig graves and bury them.

Every effort was made to stamp out Polish culture, Polish literature, science and art, the Polish language—everything indeed that might tend to keep alive the Polish national consciousness. Thus in Lodz, the "Manchester of Poland" as it has been called, the names of the streets were Germanized, the Polish shop signs were taken down, Polish newspapers forbidden to appear, Polish schools abolished, and all educational text-books in Polish withdrawn from the bookshops. In the schools Polish was made an optional subject, taught for one hour a week. It was in Lodz, too, that the discrimination against the Jews—always an important and very influential element in a great commercial city—soon became most marked. Dr. Frank decreed, for instance, that all Jews over 12 must wear an armband carrying the Shield of David (the intertwined triangles) whenever they went out-of-doors; Jews were forbidden to use certain streets save with special permission from the military commandant, and in others they were forbidden the path and forced to mingle with traffic on the roadway.



NO ARDUOUS DUTY

After the conquest of Poland the Nazis took over the public services; above, a Nazi traffic controller on duty in one of the main thoroughfares, which seems devoid of traffic.

Photo, E.N.A.

Before long, however, if Hitler's schemes came to fruition, the Jews would be removed from Lodz and the other towns of Nazi Poland altogether. His plan for the establishment of a Jewish reserve in the province of Lublin, part of the Reststaat, was set on foot, and by the end of 1939 some 50,000 Jews, mainly from Western Poland, but including a number from Vienna and Prague, had been transferred to Lublin and its neighbourhood—even in peace-time one of the poorest districts of Poland. The newcomers were allowed to take with them few of their goods and no valuables, and the Jews of the area were placed under an obligation to look after their needs. But of the normal population of 2½ millions, only some 330,000 were Jews, and the remainder, not unnaturally, looked upon the immigrants with disfavour. Particularly in the villages there was keen hostility, and the Jews suffered terribly from privation and were crowded together in the most noisome tenements. Eventually, so it was understood, all the Jews in the Reich were to be removed to the Lublin reserve, thus enabling the Nazi Government to appropriate their property and also to have at their hand in Poland a convenient reservoir of cheap labour.

Jewish 'Reserve'

Well might General Sikorski declare that "this exchange of population is the outcome of inhuman and absurd racial theories, and constitutes revolting cruelty," but it was just one item in the vast catalogue of crimes that Hitler and his Nazis committed in unhappy Poland.



GRAVES IN A WARSAW SQUARE

So great was the number of dead in Warsaw after the siege that the cemeteries were filled to overflowing. Many were buried in public gardens and squares; above, graves in the Hoover Square, named after the U.S. President who succoured the Poles after the war of 1914–1918.

Courtesy of the "News Chronicle"

Chapter 47

UNRESTRICTED SEA WARFARE: MERCHANT NAVY MEETS THE CHALLENGE

The Nazi War on Merchant Shipping—Indiscriminate Use of Mines Brought Heavy Losses to the Neutrals—Work of Minesweeping Flotillas and R.A.F. Coastal Command—Some Daring Feats by Merchant Vessels—The 'Graf Spee'—Nazi Aerial Campaign on Unarmed Fishing Craft and Merchant Ships—Four Months of War: Negligible Losses of the Allies

THE enemy's campaign against merchant shipping can be divided readily into separate stages. First, there was the initial blow by which it was hoped to devastate and completely to disorganize British shipping and everything which depended upon it. With Germany's submarines out at sea on their war stations long before war broke out, it was hoped that they would be able to deal a death-blow to the unarmed and defenceless merchant ships homeward bound on their lawful occasions. The speedy organization of convoys and anti-submarine forces by the British soon brought the heavy losses almost to zero. Then, in October, 1939, the second U-boat campaign started, coupled with the operations in the North and South Atlantic of the pocket battleships "Deutschland" and "Admiral Graf Spee."

The third stage of the enemy's campaign opened in November, 1939, and took the form of the unrestricted use of mines. In contravention of all the commonly accepted principles of international law governing the use of mines in warfare, the Germans sowed them indiscriminately in the normal traffic lanes used by the merchant ships of all nations, Allied and neutral alike.

The rate of shipping losses under neutral flags rose sharply; in fact, the figures for November were more than double those of October, rising from 40,827 tons gross to 97,368 tons gross. British losses, on the other hand, continued the diminishing trend that had started as soon as the convoy system was inaugurated. They declined from 105,455 tons gross in October to 76,778 tons gross in November, the latter figure including the armed merchant cruiser "Rawalpindi," which went down with her colours flying after a one-sided engagement with the "Deutschland" (*see* Chapter 36). Excluding this ship flying the White Ensign, and the "Northern Rover," a 655-ton trawler converted for naval purposes and lost during the same month, we find that British merchant losses for November amounted to only 59,426 tons gross—about half of the total for October. French losses in the same period declined from 45,273 tons gross to 7,648 tons gross.

Neutrals' Losses

The first victim of the mine campaign in November was the Greek cargo vessel "Nicolaos M. Embiricos," of 5,295 tons gross. She was followed by the Danish passenger liner "Canada" (11,108 tons gross), which sank in shallow water, so that her superstructure remained above the sea and constituted a danger to navigation. It was a feature of the German mines that they could be laid best in shallow channels, and many of the larger vessels which were sunk caused navigational danger to other ships.

The crew of the "Canada" were lucky enough to escape with their lives, but others were less fortunate. Thus world opinion was horrified by the tragic loss when the Dutch passenger liner "Simon Bolivar" (8,309 tons gross) fell victim to a mine. More than eighty lives were lost, and the crime was the blacker in that she was bound direct from Holland to the West Indies without any intention even of calling at a British port. Two more liners under neutral flags were sunk by mine during November—the Japanese passenger liner "Terukuni Maru" (11,930 tons gross), on November 21, and the Dutch "Spaarndam" (8,857 tons gross), six days later. Further particulars of these outrages are given in Chapter 36.

The Germans attempted to justify their warfare against neutral shipping by claiming that every sinking of a neutral vessel was a blow against Britain. This claim was refuted in many cases by the known facts. The "Simon Bolivar" was bound from a neutral port to a neutral destination. So was the Dutch tanker "Sliedricht," 5,133 tons, sunk by a German submarine on November 16, 150 miles west of Ireland, after the ship's papers had been examined.

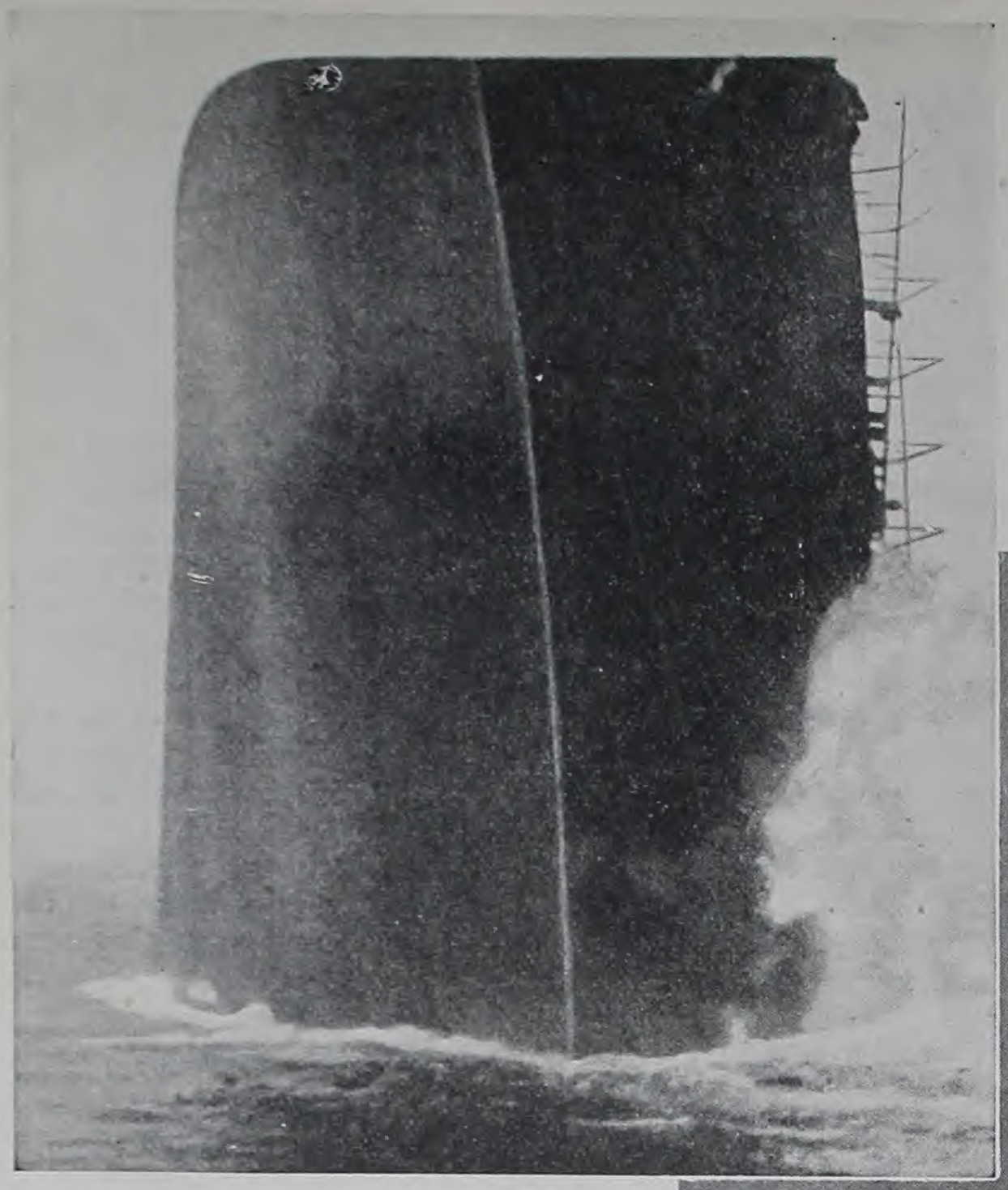
Three other neutral tankers were sunk during November, the largest being the Norwegian "Arne Kjode" (11,019 tons). The other two were victims of the mine campaign — the Swedish "Gustaf E. Reuter" (6,336 tons) and the Norwegian "Realf" (8,183 tons). Of the fifteen neutral ships sunk by enemy action during November six were of more than 8,000 tons and only three were under 4,500 tons.



HEROES OF THE MERCHANT SERVICE

Captain T. H. Farrar (left), master of the unarmed steamer 'Baharistan,' was attacked by a Nazi submarine. He defied the enemy and the 'Baharistan' made her escape. He was awarded the O.B.E. Another recipient of the O.B.E. was Cmdr. E. T. Grayston (right), master of the 'Karamea,' who also brought his ship to safety when chased by a German submarine.

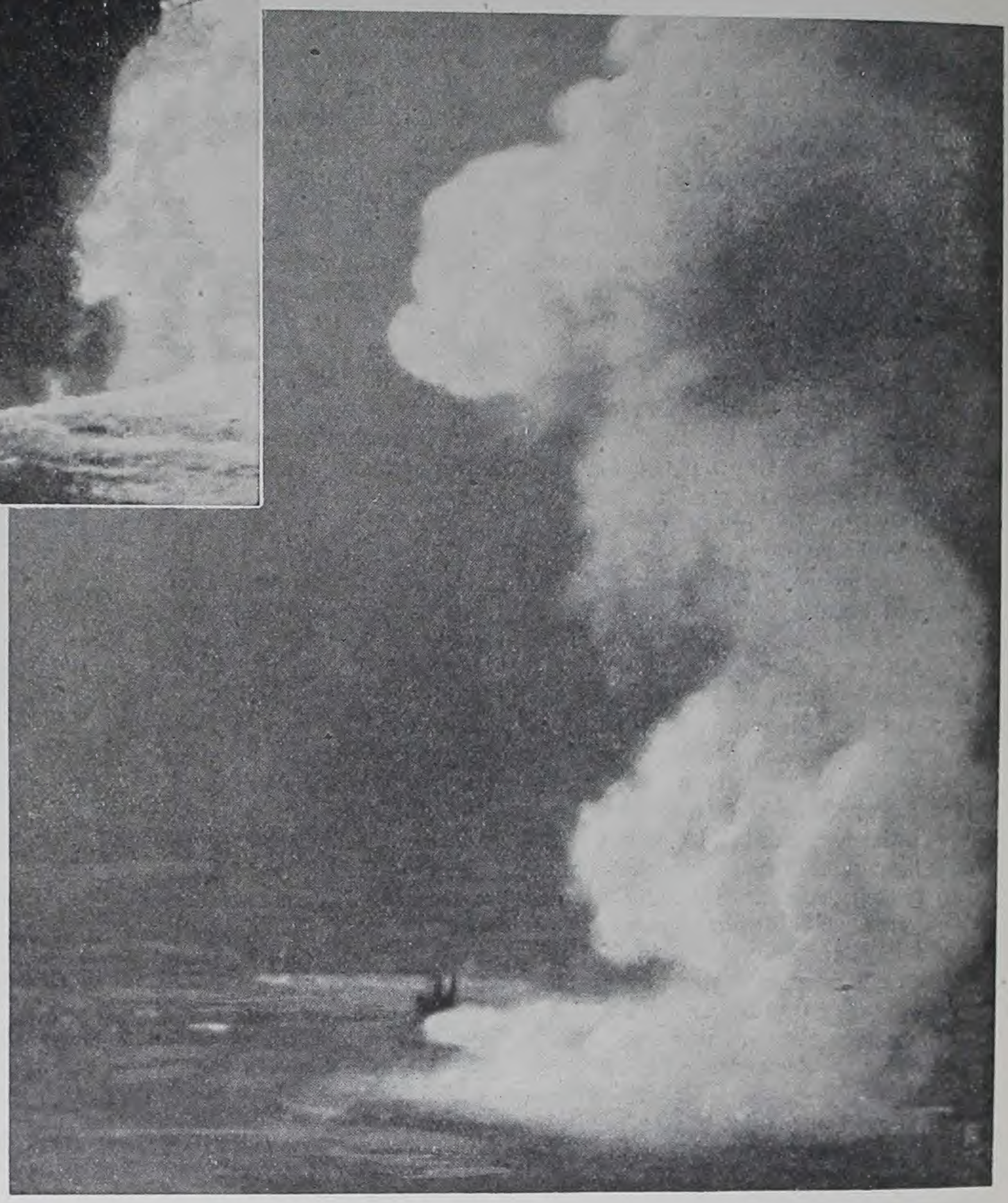
Though British tonnage lost in November was considerably less than in the previous month, the number of vessels increased from 23 to 28. Total tonnage was less because the individual ships themselves were smaller. Two were colliers and two coasters, mostly under 1,000 tons. Of the vessels coming within the category of liner, one was only of 1,041 tons, while the Ellerman liner "Ionian," though a fine modern ship, was only just over 3,000 tons. The Houlder liner "Royston Grange" (5,144 tons) was a third, while two Brocklebank ships brought the number of cargo liners lost up to five. In the first three months of the war the owners of the Brocklebank



SIGHTS THAT FILLED NAZIS WITH GLEE

Left, a British merchantman, hit by a German torpedo, plunges to her grave, her bow high above the water. Below, a trawler is seen, a mass of smoke and flame, after being hit by a bomb from a Nazi raider.

Photos, Keystone ; Fox



vessels had lost more ships in number and tonnage than any other shipowners —a total of five liners of 40,746 tons. In addition, their "Mahratta" (6,690 tons) had the misfortune to be wrecked. Their two war losses in November were the "Matra" and the "Mangalore," each of about 8,000 tons, both sunk by mine. The former vessel was struck by a floating mine while she was at anchor.

A serious loss to the Allies was that of the Polish motor liner "Pilsudski," a fine passenger vessel of 14,294 tons, under charter to the Admiralty. She sank after two explosions while proceeding along the English coast in ballast. All the crew got away in the boats, except the captain and two men, who clung to a raft. All were picked up later by a destroyer and two fishing vessels, but Captain Hamert Stankiewicz, D.S.O., died afterwards from exposure.

British merchant seamen continued to perform feats of daring which earned them distinctions. The Order of the British Empire was awarded to Capt. Farrar of the "Baharistan," Commander Grayston of the "Karamea," and Capt. White of the "Heronspool," for evading attacks by enemy submarines. The two former ships were entirely unarmed. The official account of the exploits of the "Baharistan" is as follows :

This ship was not armed. She was suddenly attacked at dead of night by an enemy submarine at very short range not far off shore near the Land's End. The U-boat fired from ahead of her on her seaward bow, so that to escape she had to turn towards the land. The master could not have been blamed for heaving to and abandoning ship. But he determined at great risk to defy the enemy and at once brought the gun flash astern. The submarine now brought her searchlight to bear, extinguished it, and continued firing. All shots fell very close, but by the bold decision and ready skill of her master "Baharistan" made good her escape and anchored safely in Mounts Bay to await daylight.

The Shaw Savill liner "Karamea" was on her way to New Zealand via the Panama Canal when she was attacked by a submarine. At least 30 shells were fired by the U-boat, many of them falling perilously near, but the master refused to surrender, relying on the possibility of help from a British aircraft or warship. "His act of faith was justified in the event," the official account states, "and saved his ship."

The award to the master of the "Heronspool" recalls the fact that three ships of the same fleet distinguished themselves in actions against submarines, earning rewards for their masters and gunlayers. The "Heronspool" was sunk after a long engagement with a U-boat, but the "Rockpool" succeeded in beating off her antagonist.

The "Stonepool" was armed for defence, and a gunnery duel between weapons of similar calibre ensued when a submarine attacked her. About 15 shots were fired by each participant, and the





MINE WARFARE IN THE NORTH SEA

Above, the crew of a Nazi minelayer are sowing their deadly weapons ; right, a Nazi mine being destroyed by fire from a British warship ; below, one of the ' kites ' which are attached to the mine-sweeping wires to ensure that the sea is swept from surface to bottom ; below right, Danish sailors about to render harmless a mine washed up on the Danish coast.

Photos, Keystone ; G.P.U. ; Dorien Leigh

enemy's last shot holed the "Stonepool" above the waterline. She succeeded in getting a shot either home or so near home that the submarine was compelled to give up the fight.

More Minesweepers

The unrestricted mine campaign of November, 1939, did not find the Royal Navy unprepared. Minesweeping flotillas were fully organized, and had been since the outbreak of war; but with the new campaign in its intensified form, further extensions were made. Numerous trawlers were fitted out for use as minesweepers and for other auxiliary purposes, and these vessels were manned by the men of the Merchant Navy.

Apart from the Royal Navy, the men of the Mercantile Marine owe a debt of gratitude also to the Coastal Command of the R.A.F. Ceaseless patrols are carried out by these seaplanes, on the watch for enemy submarines and mines. During November a strong force of Nazi aircraft made an attempt to destroy a convoy of British ships off the East Coast. R.A.F. machines intercepted them, however, and, with the help of anti-aircraft fire from the ships, succeeded in driving them away. Seven out of twelve Nazi machines failed to return home, but no hits were scored on any ship or British aircraft. "Security patrols" were also organized by the R.A.F. towards the middle of December. By maintaining routine patrols over the bases from which the enemy seaplanes left on their nocturnal minelaying activities, the R.A.F. made it almost impossible for them to set out.

December saw the end of another menace to British merchant shipping on the high seas, when in a heroic action in the River Plate the cruisers "Exeter," "Ajax" and "Achilles" engaged the pocket battleship "Admiral Graf Spee" (at first thought to have been the "Admiral Scheer") and forced her to seek shelter in Montevideo, where she later scuttled herself rather than face British warships which were lying in wait for her. (A full account of the action is given in Chapter 45.) When the battleship was driven into harbour it was learned that she had sunk several ships reported overdue during the previous two months. These were the cargo vessels "Ashlea," "Trevanion" and "Newton Beech," and the cargo liner "Huntsman" (8,196 tons). In addition, it was confirmed that she had been responsible, early in December, for the sinking of three other vessels, the cargo vessel "Streonshalh," the Shaw Savill cargo liner "Tairoa (7,983 tons), and the Blue Star liner "Doric Star." The "Doric Star," a refrigerated meat carrier of 10,086 tons, was on her way from New Zealand with a full cargo of frozen meat. When her captain saw that escape was impossible, he determined at all events to prevent the cargo from falling into the hands of the enemy and flooded the engine-room and refrigerated chambers.

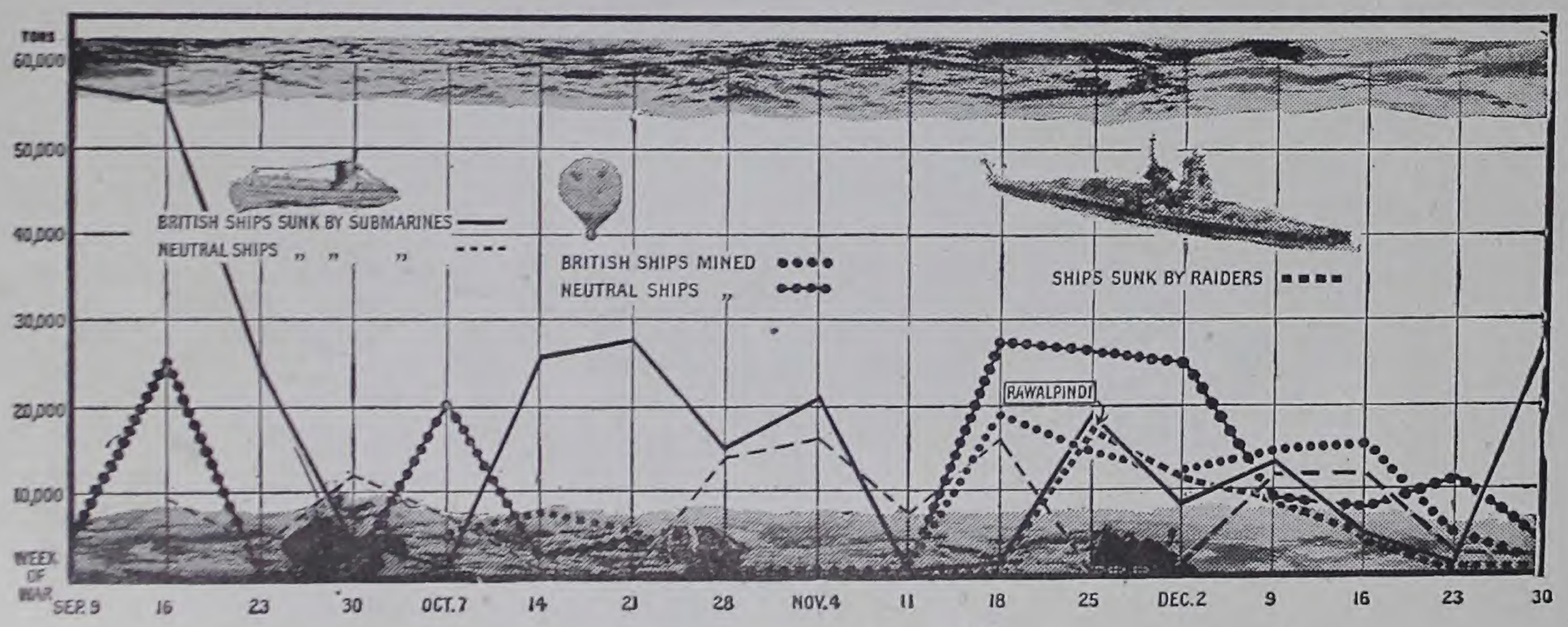
In her three months' career as a commerce raider the "Admiral Graf Spee" had sunk a total of nine ships of 50,089 tons. All these sinkings took place in the South Atlantic, with the exception of that of the small tanker "Africa Shell" (706 tons), which the raider caught off the coast of Portuguese East Africa, in ballast.

In December there was a recrudescence of British tanker losses. The first month of war had seen the loss of five, of 42,436 tons total. During October and November the only loss was the "Africa Shell." But in December the "San Alberto," "San Calisto" and "Inverlane," total being 24,548 tons, were sunk, two by mines and one by torpedo. In addition, two others, the "Atheltemplar" and "San Delfino," struck mines but were later salved. A courageous attempt was made to salve the after part of the "San Alberto," which had been torpedoed without warning at 4 a.m. on December 4.

Two more cargo liners were sunk in December, the Royal Mail liner "Navasota" (8,795 tons gross) by submarine, and the Ellerman liner "City of Kobe" (4,373 tons gross) by mine in the North Sea. This brought the total losses sustained in the war by the

ALLIED AND NEUTRAL SHIPPING LOSSES BY ENEMY ACTION, 1939

	September		*October*		*November*		*December*		*Total*	
	No.	Tons gross	No.	Tons gross	No.	Tons gross	No.	Tons gross	No.	Tons gross
BRITISH										
Passenger liners	1	13,581	1	10,183	—	—	—	—	2	23,764
Cargo liners ...	5	27,401	7	49,644	5	26,188	4	31,237	21	134,470
Cargo vessels ...	18	69,416	12	43,121	11	26,498	10	42,203	51	181,238
Colliers	—	—	1	1,692	2	2,241	2	2,166	5	6,099
Coasters	—	—	—	—	2	1,755	3	2,113	5	3,868
Tankers	5	42,436	—	—	1	706	3	24,548	9	67,690
Trawlers, etc. ...	6	2,330	2	815	7	2,038	10	2,305	25	7,488
Total under Red Ensign	35	155,164	23	105,455	28	59,426	32	104,572	118	424,617
Naval Auxiliaries										
Armed cruisers	—	—	—	—	1	16,697	—	—	1	16,697
Trawlers, etc.	—	—	—	—	1	655	7	1,850	8	2,505
Total British	35	155,164	23	105,455	30	76,778	39	106,422	127	443,819
FRENCH ...	1	2,660	6	45,273	4	7,648	1	525	12	56,106
POLISH ...	—	—	—	—	1	14,294	—	—	1	14,294
Total Allied	36	157,824	29	150,728	35	98,720	40	106,947	140	514,219
NEUTRAL ...	15	31,289	15	40,827	15	97,368	41	81,351	86	250,835
World Total	51	189,113	44	191,555	50	196,088	81	188,298	226	765,054



ANALYSIS OF NAZI SINKINGS

The graph on the left shows the tonnage of British and neutral shipping lost, from the outbreak of the war up to the end of December, 1939, by torpedo, mine and the action of Nazi raiders. In the table above Allied and neutral shipping losses are shown—the British in respect of the different categories of vessels. It will be noted that the tonnage of neutral shipping sunk amounted to half that of the Allies.

Photos, Keystone

WAR'S RAVAGES IN WARSAW

Nowy Swiat (New World) was, before the war, one of Warsaw's most famous thoroughfares and a fashionable shopping centre. It is seen as it was in those days in the upper photograph, with which the one below offers a sad comparison. Here we see Nowy Swiat after Nazi shells and bombs had done their work. Strewn over the pavement on the right is debris from the Savoy Hotel, the shattered balcony of which used to be a favourite rendezvous for diners.



AN END WITHOUT HONOUR—TH

From the beginning of the war the German Navy suffered an ever-increasing loss of prestige. The Allies showed conclusively that they held the mastery of the seas, and the defeat and ignominious end of the 'Admiral Graf Spee' accentuated the uneasiness felt by German naval circles, for Nazi propaganda

Photo, "The Daily Te



RAF SPEE' GOES TO HER GRAVE

had ceaselessly vaunted the value of this 'pocket battleship.' Here the 'Graf Spee,' whose 'victory' Dr. Goebbels had announced to all the world, is seen a blazing wreck, scuttled by the Fuehrer's orders. Photographs taken from the 'Achilles' during the action appear in pages 580-581.
Morning Post"

MAGNIFICENT EFFORT OF BRITAIN'S SHIPYARDS

Photos, Fox

Faced with savage submarine warfare and air attacks upon our merchant vessels, Britain's shipyards successfully strove to make good the losses incurred. The photograph above shows the keel of a new ship at one of the yards ; within a few weeks the ribs will be rapidly taking shape. Below, a cargo vessel, well on the road to completion, is seen. The personnel of the shipyards are well protected from air raids by strong shelters like those in the foreground.

Ellerman group to five vessels of 16,840 tons total. In addition their cargo liners "City of Paris" and "City of Marseilles" suffered damage but reached port. The latter casualty occurred early in 1940. No British passenger liners were lost either in November or December, except the former P. & O. liner "Rawalpindi," which had been converted into an armed merchant cruiser.

After three months of warfare the submarine menace had been reduced to a minimum, and only four British cargo vessels were destroyed by U-boats during December. Though their successes were negligible, however, the submarines intensified the ruthlessness of their methods. When the "Uskmouth," a vessel of 2,483 tons, was attacked in the Bay of Biscay at the end of November she evaded no fewer than three torpedoes by skilful and prompt use of the helm. But she was not to escape, for the submarine then opened fire at a range of only about 300 yards. When the crew were taking to their boats the U-boat continued to fire, using shrapnel. Two men were killed, and the boatswain fell into the sea when one of his boat's falls was pierced by a shell. The radio operator had succeeded in getting an S O S message through to a French warship which was then 65 miles away. This vessel came on the scene at full speed, and by a miracle found the boatswain still afloat and alive. She threw him a raft and went after the submarine, eventually tracing her and dealing with her. The lifeboat with the remaining 22 men was picked up by an Italian vessel.

Dodging a U-Boat

Proof was forthcoming in December that the German submarines were further infringing the rights of neutrals by operating inside territorial waters of neutral countries, where, of course, they were safe from British anti-submarine craft. The Greek steamer "Garoufalia" (4,708 tons) and the British steamers "Thomas Walton" and "Deptford" (4,460 and 4,034 tons respectively) were torpedoed in Norwegian territorial waters during December.

By the middle of December three enemy campaigns against merchant shipping had more or less petered out—submarine attack, mine warfare, and ocean raiding by surface vessels. All these weapons had been countered, and the German High Command decided to call in the use of a much-vaunted weapon, the German Air Force. Aerial attacks on convoyed ships had proved too costly and ineffective owing to the anti-aircraft defence which accompanies such convoys, so the enemy gave vent to his wrath upon all and sundry unarmed vessels—fishing craft, light vessels and coasters—which pursue their peaceful occupations in the North Sea, unconvoyed and in spite of the danger from mines and submarines.

During the first week of these bombing raids no fewer than 35 vessels of this type were attacked, and of these only three were naval patrol vessels. The naval auxiliaries were unharmed, but the German radio announced amazing successes through the aerial bombing of British "naval patrol vessels." In fact,

German Aerial Attacks on Unarmed Shipping
December, 1939

December 17, 1939		
Serenity	British motor ship	m, b, & s
Pearl	Trawler	b & s
December 18		
New Choice	Trawler	b
Arnold Bennett	Trawler	b
Trinity	Trawler	b & s
Dromio	Trawler	b
Benclair	Trawler	b
Eileen Wray	Trawler	m & b
Craigie Lea	Trawler	m & b
Dervish	Trawler	b
Compagnus	Trawler	m, b, & s
Sheldon	Trawler	b
Isabella Greig	Trawler	m, b, & s
Tuscan Star	British motor ship	m & b
Valentino Coda	Italian steamer	b
City of Kobe	British steamer (4,373 tons)	m & b
December 19		
Etruria	Trawler	m & b
Active	Trawler	m, b, & s
Zealous	Trawler	m, b, & s
Astros	Trawler	m & b
Ocean View	Trawler	m & b
River Annan	Trawler	b & s
December 21		
Uku	Estonian steamer (757 tons)	m, b, & s
December 29		
Adam	Trawler	m & b

m : machine-gunned ; *b* : bombed ; *s* : sunk

during the entire month eight trawlers of 1,722 tons total were sunk by this method, although others suffered some damage and casualties. In addition a lucky hit caused the sinking of the modern motor coaster "Serenity" (487 tons), and the Estonian vessel "Uku" (757 tons), flying the flag of Panama, was sunk by bombing from the air. In this instance women were among the neutral personnel of the ship, which was machine-gunned by aircraft.

The skipper of the "Isabella Greig," one of the trawlers which was sunk, later gave an account of his experiences. About 10 o'clock one Sunday morning two Heinkel bombers suddenly appeared and immediately opened machine-gun fire on the deck of the defenceless trawler. Between 15 and 20 bombs were dropped. While the crew were taking to the boats the aircraft again opened fire and wounded two men, as well as riddling the boat with bullets and causing her to leak. British aircraft then appeared and drove the raiders away, before signalling to another trawler (which also had been attacked) to pick up the boat from the "Isabella Greig."

The "River Earn" was another trawler which had a gruelling experience. One morning she picked up three exhausted Danish seamen who had been clinging to a raft since their ship, the "Bogo," had sunk after striking a mine. Later that day the "River Earn" was attacked by an enemy aircraft, which dropped a single bomb and then disappeared. The following morning another German flying boat paid a visit and dropped a single bomb, which also missed its mark ; but shortly afterwards two enemy aircraft came along and succeeded in hitting the trawler. The crew and the Danish survivors, thirteen in all, had taken to the boat and had missed a bomb deliberately aimed at them, but they were still 60 miles from the nearest shipping lane. For 36 hours they rowed, the boat so overcrowded that the skipper had to remain standing at the tiller for the whole time, because there was no room for him to sit down. After this feat of endurance, in squalls of hail and winter rain, they were mercifully picked up by a Swedish ship.

The total British losses for December amounted to 39 ships of 106,475 tons gross, of which trawlers, under both Red and White Ensigns, accounted for 17 ships and over 4,000 tons. The figure was an increase on that for November, and the loss of life was undoubtedly heavier, more than 180 merchant seamen losing their lives. Neutral losses showed a slight decrease in tonnage, but an alarming increase in the number of vessels sunk. Numbers increased from 15 to 41 and tonnage decreased from 97,367 to 81,351 tons gross. The majority of the neutral ships sunk were small vessels of under 3,000 tons gross—coasters and short sea traders. The largest individual loss was that of the Dutch passenger liner "Tajandoen," of 8,159 tons. Norway and Sweden were the heaviest sufferers, each flag losing over 18,000 tons of merchant shipping. The sole French loss during the month which might be attributed to enemy action was the 525-ton trawler "Dinard."

December Figures

The ship which is sunk attracts the attention of the world, but the hundreds of vessels which continue to go about their daily business are apt to be overlooked. The number of casualties may seem large, but it is completely overshadowed by the number of ships which, despite the intensity of the enemy's efforts, continue to sail over the oceans.

of the world. More than 11,000,000 tons of British shipping were constantly moving over the world's trade routes at the end of 1939. Many of the vessels which were attacked succeeded in eluding the enemy. A notable example occurred in December, 1939, when the Blue Star liner "Tuscan Star" (11,449 tons) was attacked by enemy aircraft shortly after leaving a British port. Five bombs were dropped and machine-gun fire swept the decks. The second radio officer was seriously wounded, but no direct hits were scored, and the vessel's anti-aircraft armament forced the enemy to retire. There is evidence of the might of British sea power in the statement that up to the end of 1939 no fewer than 5,911 ships had been escorted in convoys, with the loss of only 12 vessels, or 0·2 per cent of the total tonnage.

By the end of the year 1939, 226 vessels of all flags, totalling 765,054 tons, had been sunk as a result of enemy action. Of this total, neutral nations together had lost 86 ships, amounting to 250,835 tons. The British Merchant Navy lost less than double this amount —127 ships of 443,819 tons total. The rest of the grand total is made up of French and Polish losses, which bring the combined Allied losses to 140 vessels, of 514,219 tons. To these tonnage losses must be added three ships which sank as a result of striking British mines, the Belgian "Alex van Opstal" (5,965 tons), the Norwegian "Hoegh Transporter" (4,914 tons), and the British India liner "Sirdhana," 7,745 tons, which sank in the British minefield at Singapore on November 4, with the loss of about twenty lives.

To offset the Allied losses there must be taken into consideration, first, the number of German ships captured by the Allied navies and converted to Allied uses—21 ships of 102,985 tons; secondly, almost the entire Polish mercantile marine, amounting to more than 120,000 tons gross; and, thirdly, the output of Allied shipyards since the beginning of the war. At that date a huge programme of merchant shipbuilding was in progress, amounting to more than 200 ships of about 1,000,000 tons. The shipyards were working at full pitch, and more than 100,000 tons took the water before the end of October. The Ministry of Shipping, besides ordering new tonnage on Government account, took adequate steps to accelerate the pace of the building programme, and on balance the losses suffered by the merchant navies of the Allied Powers were negligible.

Behind the scenes at the Ministry of Shipping the work went on of organizing the Allied effort which was to bear fruit in later months. Complete control of Allied shipping was set up, to make the best use of the available tonnage by thorough co-operation between Great Britain, France and Poland. Steps were taken to charter neutral tonnage to increase the carrying power available to the Allies; and a comprehensive scheme of control for British shipping was worked out. Up to December 4, 1939, requisitioning by the Government was resorted to only for vessels required by the Defence Services as auxiliary cruisers, minesweepers, troopships, hospital ships, and so on. On that date a limited amount of requisitioning was carried out for commercial purposes, in particular for the transport of cereal cargoes from North America. In the New Year, however, the Government decided to bring the entire Merchant Navy—tramps and liners alike, and excepting only coasters and short sea traders—under direct control by means of wholesale requisitioning.

THE WATCH FROM THE SKIES

The photograph below was taken by one of the crew of an aircraft of the Coastal Command which, having located this neutral vessel mined off the mouth of the Thames, kept vigilant watch while the crew were rescued by naval patrols. A lifeboat is seen pulling away from the wreck.

British Official Photograph : Crown Copyright



Chapter 48

THE SEA AFFAIR: NAVAL OPERATIONS DURING THE CLOSING WEEKS OF 1939

Mr. Chamberlain's Review of Four Months' Sea Warfare—Exploits of British Submarines—Why the 'Bremen' was not Torpedoed—Winston Churchill on our 'Best Week'—Nazi Revenge on Unarmed Shipping : Ruthless Aerial Attacks on Fishing Craft—Gallantry of British Seamen—Scuttling of the 'Columbus'

At the beginning of 1940, when the war as far as Britain was concerned could only be said to have been in full operation at sea, the Prime Minister briefly reviewed the situation. He was speaking at the Mansion House on January 9, 1940, and referred to the position after four months of war as "not unsatisfactory." He recalled that the oceans of the world had been swept clear of German ships, and that the German fleet (which at the beginning of the war was less than one quarter of the British) had lost by sinking, by capture and by scuttling 228,000 tons. The rest was either bottled up in foreign ports or confined to the Baltic.

The attacks on our Fleets, on the other hand, whether by U-boat, mine or raider, had produced only meagre results. Subtracting from British losses by enemy action or ordinary marine casualties the gains by captures, by new ships or by transfers from foreign flags, the total British loss to date was 122,000 tons—less than 1 per cent of shipping under the British flag.

One Per Cent Loss

Meantime, the Prime Minister added, the inexorable pressure of sea power acting on the enemy was producing ever-increasing difficulties for her whole economy and for her ability to carry on the war. If results were not yet strikingly visible, it was certain that every effort was being made to conceal them and that they were very present in the minds of the German leaders.

Before proceeding to an account of the happenings at sea during the last three weeks of December, 1939, and the early days of the New Year, one or two further figures may be given of the results of the first four months.

British naval losses, it will be recalled, included the battleship "Royal Oak" and the aircraft carrier "Courageous," the destroyers "Duchess," "Gipsy," and "Blanche," the submarine "Oxley," the armed merchant cruiser "Rawalpindi," nine Admiralty trawlers and one drifter.

The German naval losses were the pocket battleship "Admiral Graf Spee" (the full story is told in Chapter 45), the cruiser "Leipzig" and another of the "Köln" class, not fewer than forty submarines, and seven miscellaneous vessels, minesweepers, patrol ships and trawlers.

A naval correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph" thus worked out the percentages. The "Royal Oak" represented a loss of 6·66 per cent of British capital ship strength, while the "Graf Spee" deprived Germany of 20 per cent. The "Courageous" represented about 14 per cent of British aircraft-carrier strength, but Germany possessed no completed ships in this category. The three British destroyers amounted to 1·3 per cent of the total number in service, while the "Oxley" was equal to a little under 2 per cent of the submarine total. German cruiser losses amounted to 25 per cent of the number in service; and, assuming that every German submarine under construction at the outbreak of war had been completed, the enemy's submarine losses were approximately 40 per cent.



HER HUSBAND'S MEDAL

At the first investiture held at Buckingham Palace after the outbreak of war, Mrs. Jolly (above) received the Empire Gallantry Medal awarded posthumously to her husband, Commander R. F. Jolly, of H.M.S. 'Mohawk' (illus. page 225).

Photo, Fox

Meantime, the effectiveness of the convoy system had been proved beyond doubt. Early in January, 1940, an official communiqué recorded that 5,911 ships (British, Allied and neutral) had been convoyed since September 7, and that the total lost by enemy action against convoyed ships was no more than twelve. This represented 0·2 per cent as compared with 0·67 per cent for the total losses in convoy in the war of 1914–18—a very encouraging comparison.

It must be remembered also that some of these ships were sunk by mine and not by submarine. Indeed, the chief feature of the war at sea during this period was the slackening of submarine activity on the part of the enemy. The grave U-boat losses suffered by the Germans had evidently led them to explore new avenues of destruction, chief among them being the bombing and machine-gunning of merchant vessels and unarmed fishing craft. The danger of the magnetic mine had been to some extent countered by the intensive work of the minesweeping flotillas, by the employment of balloon barrages, and by the "security patrols" of the R.A.F., which sought to arrest German minelaying activities by preventing seaplanes from setting out on such errands.

The closing weeks of the year were also memorable for some fine offensive work on the part of the British submarine service, which, observing international law and refraining from sinking the mammoth "Bremen," earned great credit by its attacks on German ships of war. The exploits of the submarines "Salmon" and "Ursula" were extremely heartening, resulting as they did in the sinking of a German cruiser and submarine, and the torpedoing of two other cruisers.

British Submarine Action

The escape of the 51,731-ton "Bremen," the biggest ship sailing under the Nazi flag, was hailed with great enthusiasm in Germany. She had last been heard of sheltering in the Russian





NAZI VESSEL THAT RAN THE GAUNTLET

The crack North German Lloyd liner 'Bremen' left New York on August 30, 1939, and after a nerve-racking voyage reached Murmansk safely on September 6. Left, the crew are seen repainting the 'Bremen' a dull grey, during the trip. Right, some of the crew on arrival in Berlin. In the centre is Captain Ahrens, the skipper. (See also illus. page 384.)

Photos. Wide World; Keystone

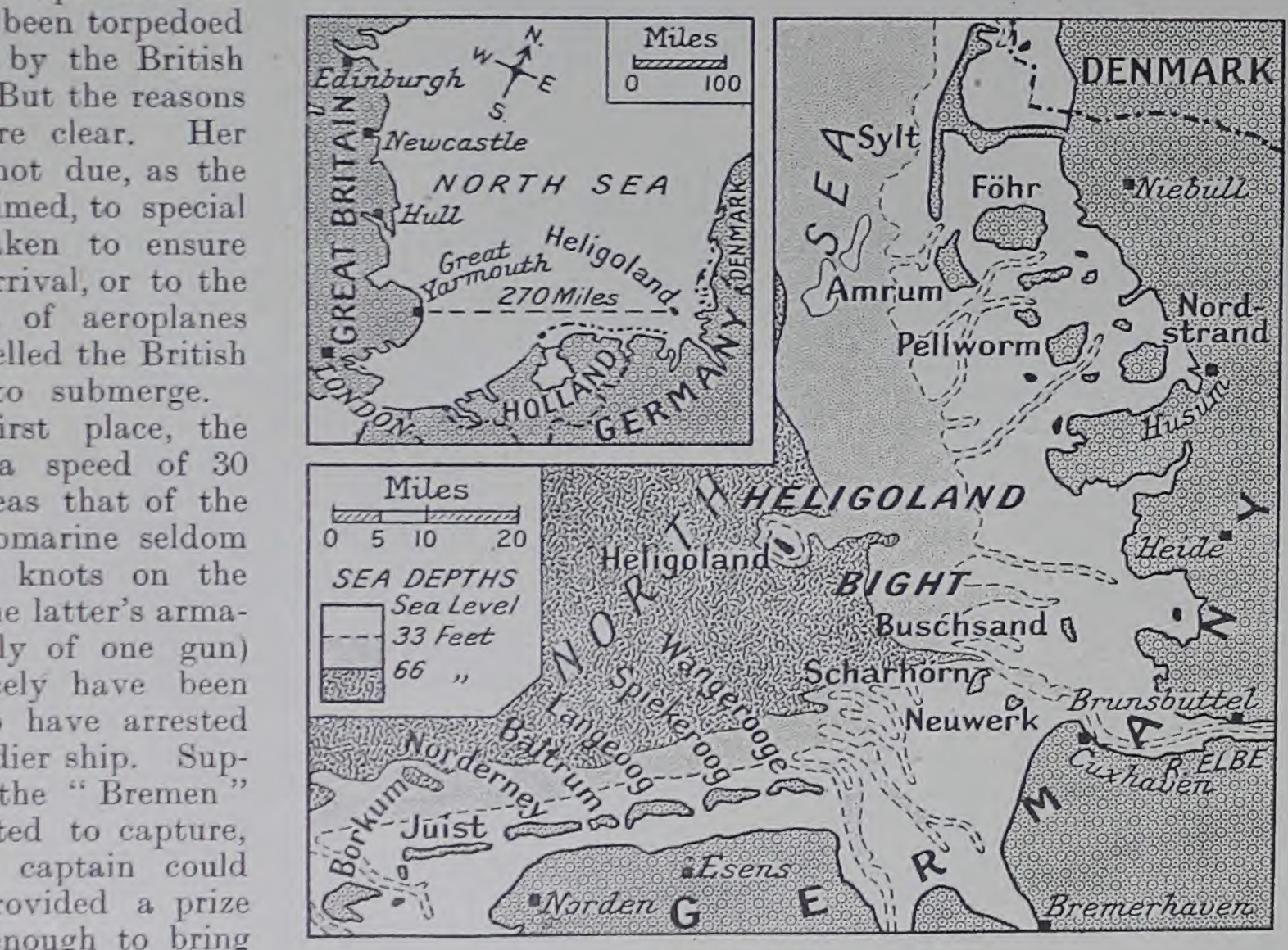
Arctic port of Murmansk, and she reached a German harbour (probably Bremerhaven) on December 12.

When the news of her escape was first announced (on December 13), some surprise was expressed that she had not been torpedoed or captured by the British submarine. But the reasons for this were clear. Her escape was not due, as the Germans claimed, to special measures taken to ensure the ship's arrival, or to the employment of aeroplanes which compelled the British submarine to submerge.

In the first place, the liner had a speed of 30 knots, whereas that of the ordinary submarine seldom exceeds 15 knots on the surface. The latter's armament (usually of one gun) would scarcely have been sufficient to have arrested the far speedier ship. Supposing that the "Bremen" had submitted to capture, the British captain could not have provided a prize crew large enough to bring her into a British port. In fact—short of letting this great prize go scatheless—there was only one course open to the British commander, and that was to torpedo the "Bremen" without warning.

This is with little doubt what the Germans themselves would have done had they had the "Queen Mary" or the "Normandie" at their mercy. But such a course was impossible to an officer of the British Navy, and, moreover, the Allies were fighting to maintain standards of humanity and decency which, quite apart from the prescriptions of international law, forbade the sinking of an unarmed vessel in such circumstances. International agreements previously signed by Germany, but cynically repudiated by her, laid down that no unarmed merchant vessel should be sunk without adequate provision being made for the safety of the crew, a provision which the British submarine obviously could not make.

The submarine in question was H.M.S. "Salmon" (Lieut.-Commander E. O. B. Bickford). Details of the encounter were made public by the Admiralty on December 18. She was on her ordinary patrol duty in the North Sea. Events, said the Admiralty communiqué, moved rapidly from the beginning. The submarine had not long been in her patrol area before she sighted a big type of U-boat. The latter was steaming fast on the surface "with all the self-assurance of a newly-painted vessel outward bound in search of Iron Crosses." The British submarine, manoeuvring to the attack, fired her



HELIGOLAND BIGHT

The map above shows the Heligoland Bight, the area over which R.A.F. aircraft maintained constant security patrols, and the scene of the exploits of the submarines 'Salmon' and 'Ursula' related in this chapter. To the north, near the Danish frontier, can be seen the island of Sylt, a Nazi seaplane base.



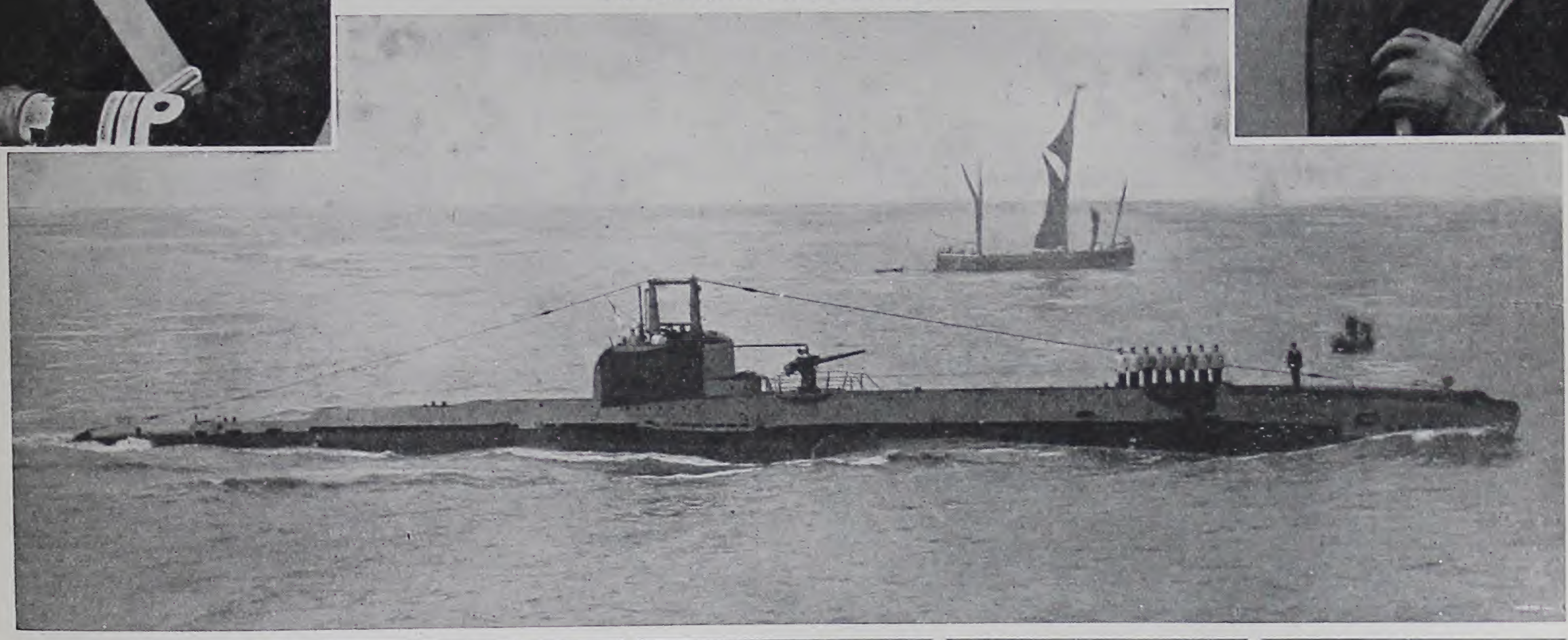




SUBMARINE HEROES HONOURED BY THE KING

Two British submarines were prominent in the news during the closing weeks of 1939 : the 'Ursula,' seen above arriving home after a daring raid on German warships in the mouth of the R. Elbe, during which she sank an enemy cruiser; and the 'Salmon' (below), which torpedoed two German cruisers. Left, is Commander G. C. Phillips of the 'Ursula' and right, Commander E. Bickford of the 'Salmon,' both of whom received the D.S.O. from the King's hands at Buckingham Palace. Some other members of the submarines' crews who were decorated are seen at the foot of the page.

Photos, Topical ; Keystone ; L.N.A.





Lt. M. Wykeham-Martin, R.N. (H.M.S. 'Salmon'), D.S.C.



Lt. Robin Hancock, R.N. (H.M.S. 'Salmon'), D.S.C.



Wt.-Eng. Owen Lancaster, R.N. (H.M.S. 'Salmon'), D.S.C.



Lt. John Greene, R.N. (H.M.S. 'Ursula'), D.S.C.



Lt. Aston Piper, R.N.R. (H.M.S. 'Ursula'), D.S.C.

torpedoes a few minutes later. A shattering explosion followed. "Through his periscope," the report added, "the commander of the British submarine saw a blinding flash. This was followed by a deafening explosion, and the wreckage was thrown at least 200 feet in the air."

The routine patrol of "Salmon" proceeded on its normal course for the next few days, till one morning her hydrophones picked up the sound of the engines of a large ship. An investigation at periscope depth revealed this to be the giant "Bremen." Had Lieut.-Commander Bickford decided to fire his torpedoes at her he could not possibly have missed her. Even when German aircraft appeared above him he could still, as he dived, have fired six torpedoes into the liner. But, in the terse words of the Admiralty account, "he did not so decide." He had signalled the "Bremen" to stop instantly, but to this signal the liner had paid no notice. He had ordered his gun to be loaded to fire over her bows, but this second warning was never given, and before the shot could be fired, hostile aeroplanes forced him to dive. Even now he could have sunk the ship with his torpedoes, but—"he did not so decide." These deadly missiles were reserved for legitimate prey—enemy war vessels.

The "Bremen" steamed on to her wartime sanctuary; the "Salmon" for her part continued the routine patrol. A day passed and the submarine, cruising submerged sighted German battleships: the two battle-cruisers "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisenau," and one of the pocket battleships with three cruisers in company. The British commander at first thought that he could do no more than report the facts that the enemy was at sea, giving his strength, position, and course, for the German ships were steering so that they would pass a long way from the "Salmon." Of the three cruisers one had been identified as the "Leipzig," the other two as the new

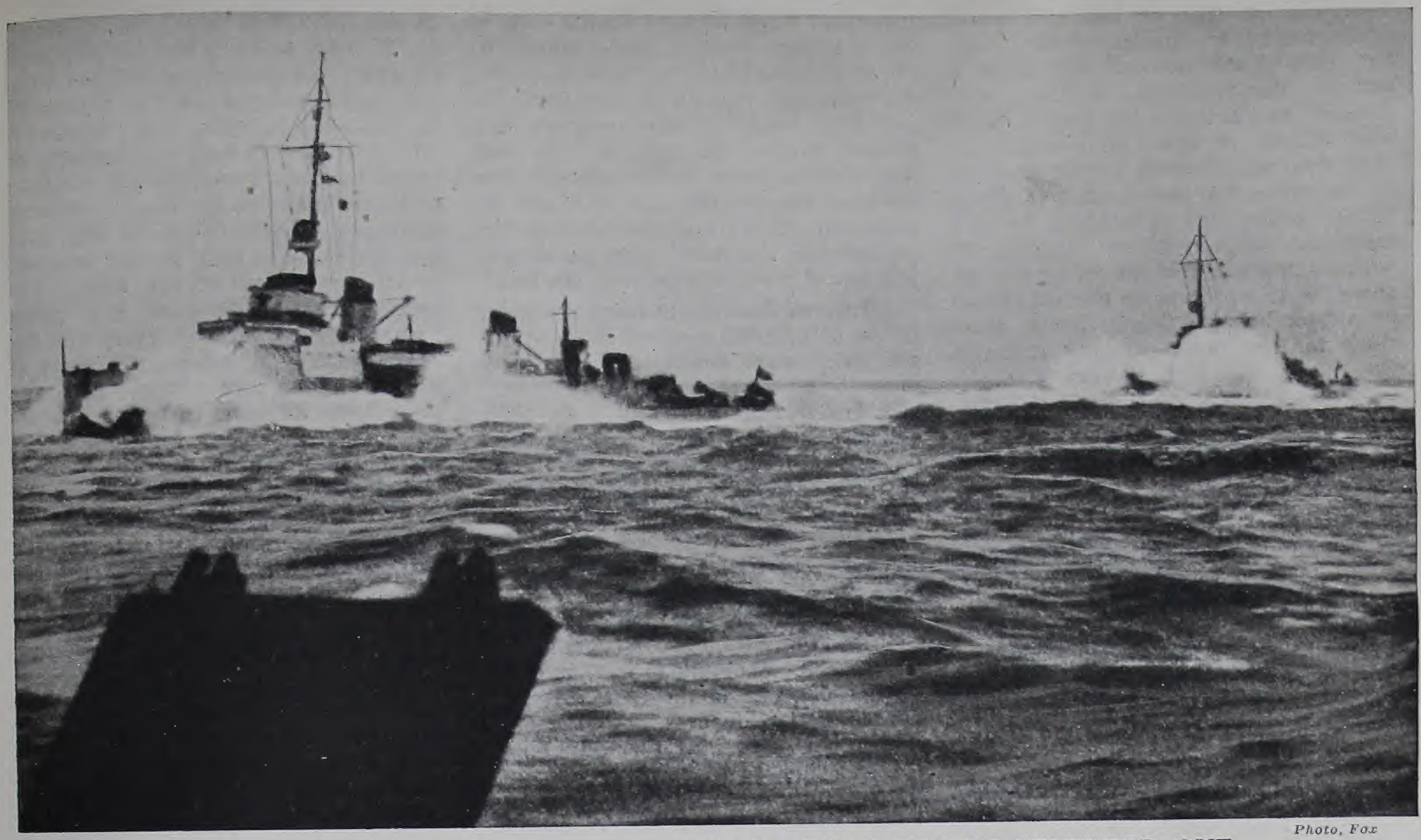


LAST OF A NAZI LUXURY LINER

Adhering to their policy of scuttle rather than surrender, the Nazis sacrificed the 32,000-ton North German Lloyd liner 'Columbus' on December 19, 1939. On the left sailors are hastily leaving the burning ship, while below two of the vessel's lifeboats are seen pulling away from the doomed liner. 579 survivors were picked up by the U.S.S. 'Tuscaloosa.'

Photos, Keystone





Photo, Fox

VESSELS THAT SELDOM VENTURED OUT

Faced with the unimpaired might of the Allied navies, it was seldom that units of the German fleet left the sanctuary of their bases. Above, German destroyers are seen on one of the few occasions when they left their base, only to slip back again when they found there was no escape.

eight-inch-gun ships "Hipper" and "Blücher."

At the moment of sighting they seemed too distant to be easy prey to the British submarine, but they suddenly altered course and passed within torpedo range. The commander could have fired all six torpedoes at one ship and have made certain of sinking her; instead of this he fired them on slightly different courses, hoping thereby to do more widespread damage.

The "Salmon's" first torpedo hit the "Leipzig." Two more terrific explosions proved that two more torpedoes had hit another cruiser.

Epic of the 'Salmon'

This was one of the "Blücher" class, but which it was could not at the time be decided, for the "Salmon" was now being harried and had to dive deep to avoid destruction. She steered a zigzag course at depth; for two hours she was hunted and depth-charged, but was never seriously damaged.

Indeed, with superb impudence she returned that night to the scene of her kill and found it an unpleasant place in which to manoeuvre, for four square miles were thickly coated with fuel oil. After ventilating with some clean air, she dived again and made her way to her home port. No one was more surprised than her commander and her crew when they were greeted by the sirens of the ships present. Lt.-Commander Bickford is reported to have said: "I hope that every British submarine will have the same luck as we did."

Little more than a week afterwards royal recognition was given to the gallant officers and crew of H.M. Submarine "Salmon." Lt.-Commander Bickford was promoted Commander and awarded the D.S.O.; three of his officers were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and eight other members of the crew received the Distinguished Service Medal, with various promotions.

To make this narrative of naval activity complete we must refer here to the magnificent victory of the River Plate on December 13, 1939, when the German pocket battleship "Admiral Graf Spee" was engaged by three British light cruisers ("Achilles," "Ajax" and "Exeter") and, after a fierce battle, was forced to take refuge in Montevideo harbour. She emerged on December 17, but only to scuttle herself in the fairway. Her commander, Captain Langsdorff, took his life a few days after. The full story is given in Chapter 45.

On December 18 the Admiralty stated that H.M. Submarine "Ursula," one of the three smallest submarines in the Service, had sunk a German cruiser of the "Köln" class at the mouth of the Elbe. The "Ursula" had a displacement of 540 tons, compared with that of 1,500 tons for an ocean-going submarine. She had penetrated the dangerous waters of the Heligoland Bight; she had risked the minefields and the ever-vigilant enemy patrol service, and had succeeded in sinking a cruiser, which must have been either the "Köln," the "Königsberg" or the "Karlsruhe," three ships of 6,000 tons completed in 1920. They had a speed of 32 knots, were armed with nine 5·9-in. guns and some smaller guns, had twelve 21-in. torpedo tubes, and carried aircraft.

As was said by a distinguished naval authority at the time ("The Times," December 19, 1939):

> "To penetrate right into the Heligoland Bight to the mouth of the Elbe, where German anti-submarine craft presumably teem, to penetrate a destroyer screen and torpedo the ship it protects, and finally to elude the inevitable counter-attacks in the shallow waters of the Bight, are remarkable achievements, not surpassed even by an earlier generation of submarine officers in the Dardanelles and the Sea of Marmara in 1915. The standard is well maintained."

As far as British submarines were concerned it was "the best week," said Mr. Winston Churchill, "I can ever

remember in this or the last war." Broadcasting on December 19, 1939, the First Lord pointed out what a serious disadvantage British submarines were at in the few targets which were offered to them for attack. As they were not allowed, by the customs of the sea or the conventions to which Great Britain had subscribed, to sink merchant ships without warning or without providing for the safety of their crews, or to wage war on neutral vessels or attack humble fishing boats, their work for the most part lay amongst the minefields and in the strongly defended waters of the Heligoland Bight. "The German warships," said the First Lord, "hardly ever venture out of port and then only for furtive dashes."

He referred to the very dashing exploit of the "Ursula" in sinking a cruiser surrounded as the latter was by six destroyers, which took place in the same week that almost on the other side of the globe the pocket battleship "Graf Spee" had met her inglorious end. And then with withering contempt he reminded his listeners:

'Ursula's' Exploit

"The Nazi Navy and Air Force are venting their wrath for these many blows by redoubling their efforts to sink fishing smacks and drown the fishermen in the North Sea."

Indeed, the story of the war at sea during the last weeks of 1939—apart from the outstanding naval actions which have been described above—is one of the senseless and obstinate cruelty of an enemy who bombed and machine-gunned defenceless fishing smacks. On one day alone (December 17) aerial bombing attacks were made on fourteen merchant and fishing vessels in the North Sea, and in most cases the men on the decks were machine-gunned. Eleven of these vessels were fishing trawlers and four of them were sunk. The skipper of one, the "Craigie Lea," thus described his experiences:

"I never thought that white men would do what those Germans did to us. They gave us no warning before they started to bomb and machine-gun us. They circled round us repeatedly and sprayed the vessel with bullets. The crew were on deck when they made the first attack, and I told my men to take cover immediately. We had an amazing escape."

But not all were so fortunate. In the trawler "Pearl" three men were hit (one seriously, with seven bullet wounds). Not content with bombing and sinking the Granton trawler "Isabella Greig," the Nazi 'planes again swooped down as the crew were being rescued by another fishing vessel and machine-gunned them. This was no isolated instance of the kind of treatment these luckless fishermen might expect. As the crew of the "Eileen Wray" made efforts to lower the lifeboats the attacking aircraft swooped again and again, and the men had to leap for cover no fewer than sixteen times. Happily in this case the bombers were bad marksmen and the ship was not hit; but to avoid the attentions of the machine-gunners, the captain said the crew "were jumping in and out of cover like jacks-in-the-box."

All signals from the trawlers appealing to the aeroplanes to allow the boats to get away were disregarded, the only reply being more bursts of machine-gun fire and more bombs. In their official announcement of this dastardly day's work the Germans talked proudly of their successful attacks on British coastguard vessels and patrol boats.

Another story of German piracy was given by eight survivors of the Royal Mail liner "Navasota," torpedoed on December 5 in the Bay of Biscay. They described the outrage as "mass murder," for the ship was sunk in a raging gale when there was no hope whatever of launching the lifeboats. All the crew could do was to hurl themselves into the sea, cling to the floating wreckage and hope for rescue. Succour came from a Clan steamer, which braved possible attack from a submarine still operating in the neighbourhood. One "Navasota" survivor had been torpedoed twice in seven days, but all said that they were prepared and eager for further service. The captain was last seen running up the ensign to the masthead.

From such murky stories of cruel and shameful sea warfare by the enemy it is a relief to turn to one or two accounts of conspicuous gallantry and resource on the part of British officers and men. It will be recalled that during the Nazi raid on the Firth of Forth on October 16 one of the ships attacked was the "Mohawk," her captain, Lt.-Commander Jolly, being one of the many casualties. He was mortally wounded in the stomach, but refused to leave the bridge or allow himself to be attended to: he continued to direct the "Mohawk" for a 35-mile passage home, which lasted 1 hour and 20 minutes. His voice was too weak for his orders to be heard, but these were repeated by his wounded navigating officer. He was repeatedly urged to go down to receive medical attention, but he refused, saying: "Leave me—go and look after the others." Having brought his ship into port, Lt.-Commander Jolly rang off the main engines and immediately collapsed. He died within five hours.

Another thrilling story of the sea was revealed in the attempt of the captain of the London tanker "San Alberto" (7,397 tons) to bring half his ship back to port. The tanker was attacked without warning by a German submarine on December 9, 1939. The torpedo explosion cut her in half, and the forepart twisted and sank immediately. Captain and crew took to the boats, but later the captain decided that the after part was not likely to sink, so they returned to what was left of the ship. The engines were started and kept going "slow astern." Even so, every time the vessel came head to sea great strips of plating were torn away, and the magnificent attempt to take her home had to be abandoned. All through that night and the next day the captain waited. Seas were so heavy that the attempts of a Belgian tanker, the "Alexandra Andra," to take off the crew failed, and it was not till the following morning that a British destroyer effected the rescue. By this time the remnant of the "San Alberto" was sinking by the stern.

The fine work of the R.A.F. Coastal Command and the Fleet Air Arm continued to have its effect day by day, both in normal patrol work and in directing the rescue of U-boat victims. There is a story of how six survivors of the Swedish steamer "Listor" were floating on a ready-made raft when they were spotted by a British aeroplane making for a distant and urgent military objective. This aircraft made the necessary signals to shipping, but before help could arrive a heavy gale had sprung up, driving the raft fast to leeward. Another aeroplane was now on the scene, and wirelessed to a destroyer more than 100 miles away the position in which she had found the raft. When the destroyer got to within 35 miles of the scene, the aircraft intercepted her and by firing flares gave the position of the raft. All six men were rescued.

Rescue by Air

During the month of December the Germans continued their policy of scuttling their merchant ships rather than submitting to surrender. The most important of these sacrifices was the 32,000-ton North German Lloyd liner "Columbus," sunk 300 miles N. of Cape Henry, Virginia, on December 19. Her captain was aware that two British destroyers were waiting for the liner outside the neutral zone.

The Nazis also continued to claim non-existent victories, such, for instance, as the sinking of a battleship of the "Queen Elizabeth" class. This ship was able to reach harbour for repairs with comparatively few casualties.

Chapter 49

AFTER FOUR MONTHS OF WAR: THE POSITION AT THE END OF 1939

Strange Warfare on the Western Front—Intensified Aerial Activity Over the Sea - Epic Struggle in Finland: Magnificent Counter-thrusts Against the Invaders—Nazi Threats to the Western Neutrals—Fury Against Britain—German Interests in the Baltic—Riddle of the Balkan Peninsula

As the year which History will ever associate with the opening of the Second Great War drew speedily to its close, the nations involved in the struggle, and the neutral powers shivering uncomfortably on its verge, nerved themselves for the time of trial and testing that the new year must inevitably bring.

It was a strange war to which 1939 bade its adieu. Still on the Western Front the armies of the principal combatants frowned at each other from their fortified walls. Occasionally there was the crack of a rifle, the blast of a gun, but along most of the two-hundred-mile front, for the greater part of each and every day and night, there was nothing to break the silence. British and French, separated from the Nazis by a few hundred yards of a No-man's-land in which vast expanses of barbed wire sprawled across the untilled fields, watched and waited for the move that the other might make—the move which should unloose all the caged and muzzled dogs of war. But as yet there was no move of menace.

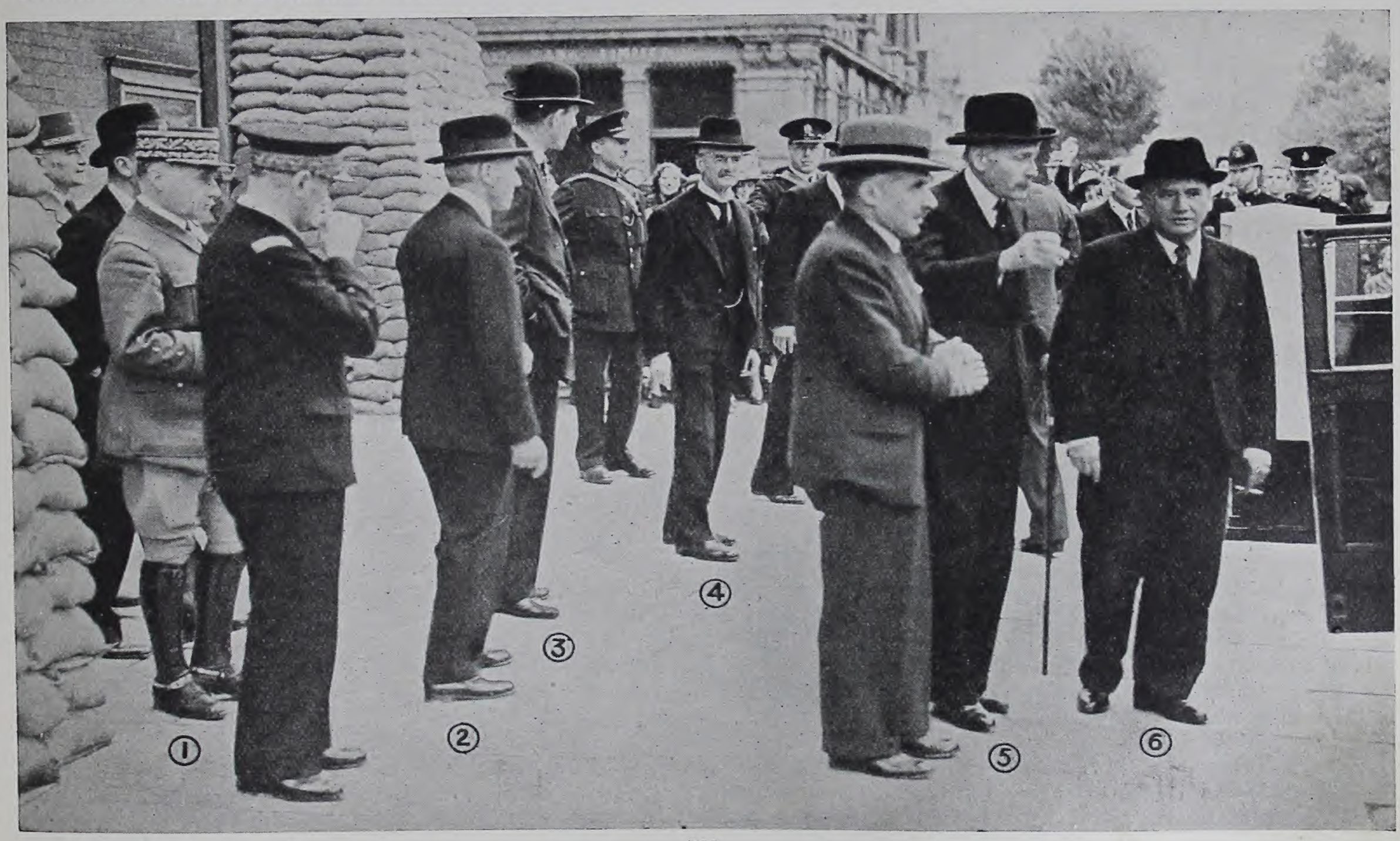
On the sea and in the air, however, and on land in Finland, war raged and flamed. Thoughts of approaching Christmas were pushed into the background by the glorious news that came from the South Atlantic, news which told of three British cruisers who, throughout a long summer day, chased and harried one of Germany's vaunted pocket battleships and at dusk drove her into the shelter of a neutral port. The battle of the River Plate, the defeat and ignominious end of the "Admiral Graf Spee," captured the attention of the world, and there was not a neutral who did not join in the tribute of admiration for the victors' gallantry, dash, magnificent gunnery and superb seamanship. Only in Germany was there never a whisper of generous appreciation—only flimsy fabrications, discarded almost as soon as they were uttered, snarls of hate and savage rage. Less than forty-eight hours after the "Graf Spee" had become a burning wreck, a nuisance deliberately planted in the highway of a neutral roadstead, Germany's crack liner "Columbus" was scuttled off the coast of Carolina by her captain's order, to avoid capture by a British warship.

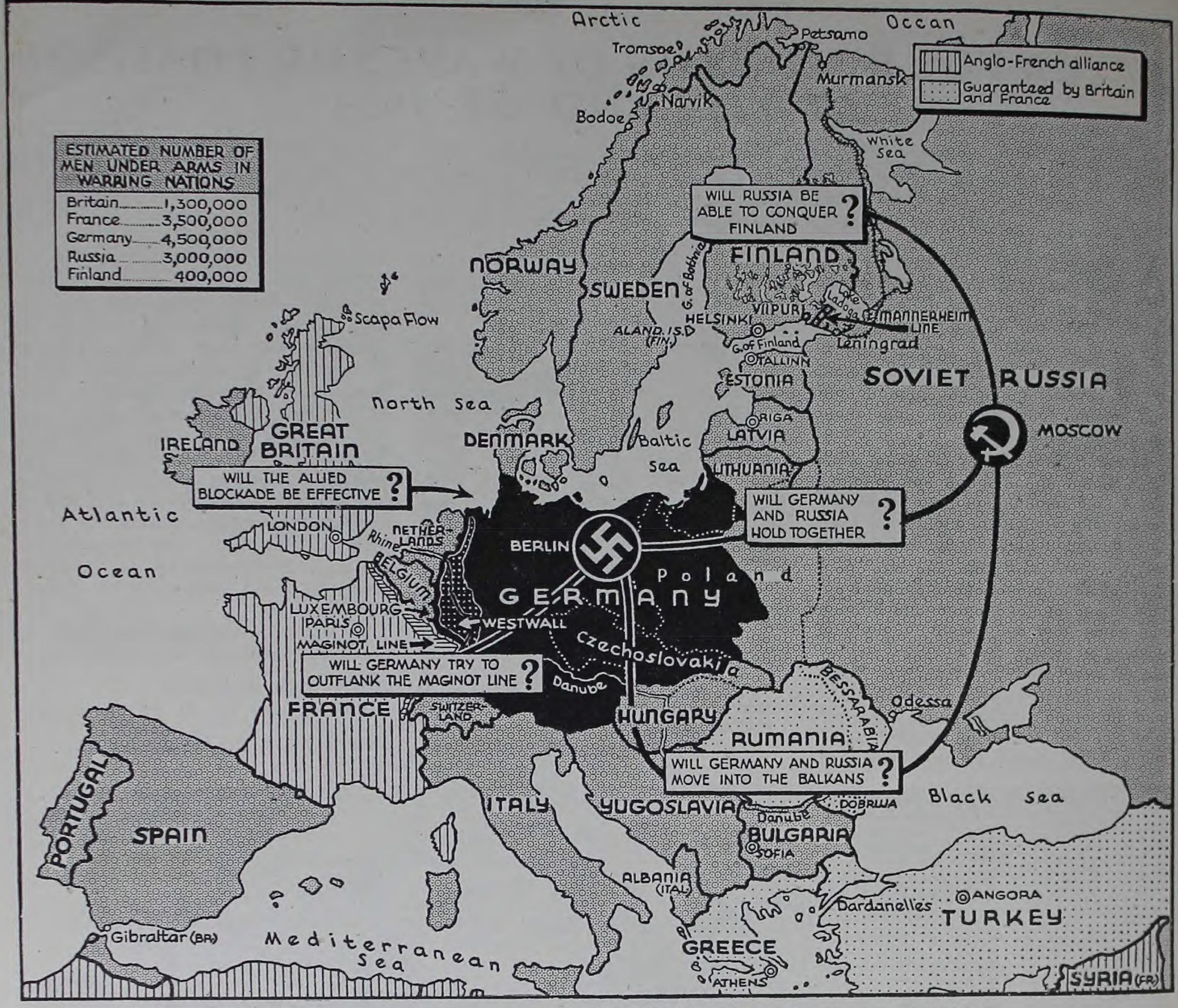
By way of revenge for these disasters, the Nazis developed to a further pitch

FIRST SESSION OF SUPREME WAR COUNCIL

Soon after the outbreak of war the Allied Supreme War Council held its first meeting in a Sussex town. The photograph shows: 1, General Gamelin; 2, Lord Chatfield; 3, Lord Halifax; 4, Mr. Neville Chamberlain; 5, M. Corbin; 6, M. Edouard Daladier

Photo, Topical Press





PROBLEMS THAT FACED THE ALLIES

From its earliest stages the future development of the war proved entirely unpredictable, even to naval and military experts. The sketch-map above shows the five major problems with which the Allies were faced at the beginning of 1940. To none of them could any positive answer be given.

From "The New York Times"

of intensity that new experiment in frightfulness which involved the bombing and machine-gunning of defenceless coastal vessels, principally small merchant ships and fishing craft.

From December 18 onwards hardly a day passed but saw a number of these attacks, carried out by the most modern warplanes, on little vessels which, for the most part, possessed not a single gun wherewith to put up even the slightest attempt at resistance. Never was the true spirit of Nazism displayed in such horrid clearness as now; never, too, did the simple fisherfolk and trawlermen of our coastal towns show to better advantage than when they refused to be daunted by the murder-attacks from the air, but put out to sea in their little craft with that same dogged courage which has made them known throughout the world.

In Finland at the year-end the tide of war was still flowing with the defenders. Contrary to the prognostications of most of the experts, the Finns —despite their numerical weakness and other disadvantages—withstood the onslaught of the Red Army, and time and again drove back the Soviet legions with heavy loss.

When at the beginning of December the Russians had invaded Finland on eight fronts (as described in Chapter 41) they were able to make some territorial gains, more particularly in the north, in the Petsamo sector, and in the central zone, where it seemed possible that in a short time the "waistline" of Finland would be severed and her communications cut with the outer world from whom assistance might be expected and was, in fact, promised.

Finland's sympathizers were enheartened by the results of the stern battles waged during December; for the present, at least, the Finns held the enemy in check, and soon there came the news of victories all along the line. December 21 was Stalin's birthday, and the day was chosen by the commissars of the Kremlin as one to be marked by a great and glorious victory of the Red Army over the Finns. In the result, however, it was the Finns who achieved the triumph—and a splendid triumph

it was. North of Lake Ladoga, near Tolvajärvi and Aglajärvi, the battle ended in the complete rout of the invaders, whose leading division was wiped out as a military force. Even in the far north, where the Russians could draw on their base at Murmansk, the Finns pushed them back on Petsamo. Already the Russian casualties in a month of war, against a foe far, far inferior in numbers and equipment, were supposed to be in the neighbourhood of 100,000 men, and the tracks through the forest which was the battlefield were littered with abandoned lorries and incapacitated tanks. Through the Christmas period the Finns continued their magnificent counter-thrust against the Russian invaders, and so successful were they that in some districts the war was carried over the frontier into enemy territory. The Finnish war is, however, the subject of other Chapters; here we are concerned with it only as a detail, and a highly interesting and important detail, in our mind's-eye picture of the world of war as 1939 slipped from the calendar.

To complete this picture we must include in our survey not only the countries involved in war, declared or undeclared, but all the states situated on the fringe of the struggle. In modern war it is becoming almost true to say that there are no neutrals; certainly all the neutral states of Europe, from Scandinavia to the Low Countries, from Switzerland to the Balkans, found themselves in an exceedingly uncomfortable and oft-times dangerous situation. Particularly did their position become more precarious and threatened as the immobilization of the armies of the principal belligerents on the Western Front became more certain and seemingly ever more permanent. So immensely strong were the rival "walls" of Maginot and Siegfried that it seemed unlikely that either Germany or the Allies would venture on a frontal attack, and it became increasingly tempting to speculate where the battlefield of the morrow would be found.

Low Countries Invasion?

At the turn of the year it was widely believed that Germany was contemplating a violation of the neutrality of Holland and Belgium—either or both—with a view to taking the defenders of the Maginot Line in the rear. The proposal might be found a tempting one by Hitler, for an invasion of the Low Countries would be just such a spectacularly dramatic stroke as he had shown himself to love. The German High Command, however, almost certainly found the scheme little to their taste, if only because it involved a winter campaign. True, if successful, a sudden onslaught on the Low Countries—a "Blitzkrieg" such as had been launched in Poland a few months before—might bring with it gains of the most solid and valuable description, of which aerodromes and submarine bases on the Dutch coast, greatly facilitating the war against Britain, would be amongst the fruit. But on the other side might be advanced not only such intangibles as the effect on world opinion, more particularly on American opinion (for the Dutch strain is still most marked in the social pattern of the U.S.A., and President Roosevelt himself is of Dutch descent); there was the fact that the Dutch army of some 250,000, not counting reserves, might be expected to put up a most spirited and prolonged resistance in a terrain peculiarly ill-suited for the movements of mechanized troops. Some part of eastern Holland would be overrun, no doubt, in the first few hours or in a day or two at most, but then the invaders would be confronted by the Water Line, a vast and formidable system of canals and rivers and low-lying country which by opening the sluices and flood gates could be converted into a strong barrier. In November Holland was definitely threatened, and it is probable that the invasion was averted or postponed at the eleventh hour as a result of the resolute attitude taken up by the Government of Queen Wilhelmina — an attitude greatly strengthened by the support and encouragement that were forthcoming in no uncertain measure from Belgium. King Leopold and his ministers let it be known that Belgium would fight not only if her own territory were attacked but if that of her sister state were violated, and about the same time the little country's readiness to face the ordeal of war was stressed most openly. In an interview a few days after Christmas Senator Paul Crockaert, President of the Commission of National Defence of the Belgian Senate and a former Minister of Defence, pointed out that never before in her history had Belgium possessed so large an army, for not only had she mobilized 650,000 trained men, provided with the best and most modern of armaments, but she had in reserve several hundred thousand more. For the country's defence, he went on, Belgium could not only rely implicitly on the Dutch, but she had three successive lines, in

Danger Averted



FRENCH VETERANS REVIEWED BY POLISH GENERAL

When the new Polish Government was constituted in France after the conquest of Poland by Germany and Russia, it installed itself at Angers. Here, General Sikorski, the Polish Premier and Commander of the Polish Army, is saluting the colours of French veterans of 1914–18.

Photo, Keystone



CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR THE FUEHRER

During his visit to the Siegfried Line at Christmas, 1939, Hitler, 'the eagle who swooped on Czechoslovakia and Poland' to defend his frontiers from 'the enemy' (to quote the Nazi press), received this hand-carved wooden eagle.

Photo, International Graphic Press

which water and other natural defences, such as the mountains of the Ardennes, were skilfully combined with the great fortresses of Liége, Namur, and Antwerp. "If we are attacked we shall put up a fierce resistance," he said, "-foot by foot, and this resistance will have more than one surprise in store for the aggressor."

Time and again in those weeks of waiting and suspense Belgium was joined with Holland as the target of the Nazis' threats and objurgations, but never for a moment did the little countries lose their sang-froid in what was fittingly styled the "war of nerves." Even Luxemburg, the tiny principality of 999 square miles to the south of Belgium, managed to maintain her equanimity, although her position in an angle formed by the Maginot Line and the German Westwall exposed her to all the chances and trials of a sudden invasion.

Facing Threats with Calm

No doubt in their decision to hold their hand—for the time being at least—the Nazi war lords had regard to the defences, actual and possible, of their intended victims; but it may be suspected that their plans were also affected by the realization that south-west of the Belgian frontier was encamped the British Expeditionary Force, which at the beginning of this war, as of the last, might hope to play a decisive part.

On the one hand, then, by invading the Low Countries the Nazis would be able to point a pistol at the head of Britain, to use the phrase coined to suit the circumstances of an earlier age; but against this advantage, great as it might appear to be, should be ranged an addition to Germany's foes of a million well-armed and well-trained men, fighting on their own soil in defence of their own homes and liberties. Again, though, in the event of air war developing in real earnest, London and the ports of Britain would be within easy reach of German bombers based on Walcheren, at the same time an aerial corridor would be opened up to Britain's raiders as they headed their 'planes for the vital industrial areas of the Reich and the Rhineland. Apprehensive, perhaps, of the dangers inherent in thus exposing their own most important flank whilst endeavouring to turn that of the enemy, the German High Command did not give the order to march to the armies which for weeks and months past had kicked their heels in the western provinces of the Reich.

Yet if Holland or Belgium was not invaded, it was difficult to see where and how the Germans could come to real grips with that country which by now was widely advertised and generally recognized as the Reich's most dangerous foe—Britain. True, war was proceeding briskly enough at sea, but even to the most bemused member of Hitler's associates it can hardly have seemed probable or possible that the hit-and-run raids on the British coasts and islands and the savage attacks on merchant ships and fishing trawlers could bring the struggle to a speedy and successful conclusion. Britain and France held command of the seas in this war to an even greater degree than in the last, and sooner or later the inexorable hold of the blockade on Germany's imports and exports, and, through them, on the economic and social life of all her people, must drag down the Reich of Hitler, just as, a quarter of a century before, it brought destruction to the proud fabric of Imperial Germany.

'Wir fahren gegen England'

In this stage of the war Hitler was left with the initiative, and the Allies seemed content to let it rest in his hands. The war of nerves went on, and there were obvious attempts—*e.g.*, by troop concentrations along the frontiers—to hoodwink French and British statesmen as to Nazi plans. Also Hitler continued to pour out invective. Not many a day passed without his attacking England and the English. In his New Year message to



FRENCH AID FOR FINLAND

Taken in Stockholm, this photograph shows two women volunteer ambulance drivers with one of the motor ambulances sent to Finland by the Section Sanitaire Automobile of the French Red Cross.

Photo, Courtesy of the French Embassy







DESERTED VILLAGES OF FRANCE IN THE WAR ZONE

From the very beginning of the war the French towns and villages situated near the German frontier were evacuated by the civilian inhabitants. Our photographs show : top left, soldiers rounding up cattle and sheep in an abandoned village of Lorraine ; above, a barricaded street in an evacuated town ; left, French sentries examining evacuees' identity papers ; below, a deserted village in the advanced zone.

Photos, Courtesy of French Embassy ; Keystone



the German people, for instance, he fulminated that: "Germany and the whole of Europe must be freed from the usurpation and perpetual menace which has its origin in past and present England. The warmongers and the war declarers must this time have the weapons once and for all knocked out of their hands"—and his henchmen needed no encouragement to take their master's cue. Thus Field-Marshal Goering, in his message at the opening of a year which might be fateful for Germany and the Nazi Reich, declared that, "Now the concentrated power of the Reich is turned against the enemy in the West, against the enemy whose brutal will to destruction has forced this war upon us." England was the enemy. But how to punish her for daring to set herself athwart the path of Germany's march to European hegemony? How to take vengeance on her for her perversity in standing by her word given to Poland, when it should have been so obvious that the war was over so far as Poland was concerned?



ART FOR DIFFERENT ENDS

In these photographs of forts of the Siegfried Line (above) and of the Maginot Line (below) we see art put to two different uses. The typically heavy German bas-relief has a propaganda appeal to the Nazi soldier. The apparently crude French paintings of trees and forts are for camouflage, so that from the air the fort merges into the trees in the background.

Photos, E.N.A.; Planet News

Looking round the frontiers of Greater Germany the Fuehrer searched hungrily for a possible opening through which he might dispatch his armies with their superabundant wealth of offensive machinery. On the west there was still one other neutral country which might provide a doorway into the hinterland of the Maginot Line, but Switzerland had put her defences on a war footing and was keeping under arms a force of 650,000 men. It was stated that the German High Command had prepared plans for an invasion of Switzerland which would bring their armies within reach of central France. One plan was believed to involve a march through the heart of the little republic, following the line of the great lakes to Geneva, whence the invaders might strike north to Lyons or south to Marseilles; another, to consist in taking the northern route and entering France by crossing the Jura and so making an advance on Belfort. Yet a third and less ambitious proposal took the shape of a violation of Swiss territory—so small a violation that to German eyes it might not be expected to count as such at all—just north of Basle, where the frontiers of Switzerland, France and Germany meet. But, so it was said, Nazi strategists calculated that forty days would be required to force the passage through Switzerland if the Swiss put up a determined resistance, and a superiority of five to one at least would

Swiss Stand Firm





AIRCRAFT CARRIER SUNK BY THE NAZIS

H.M.S. ' Courageous,' an aircraft carrier of 22,500 tons, was torpedoed and sunk on September 17, 1939, with a loss of 515 men, including the commander, Captain N. A. Makeig-Jones. Above, the vessel is seen shortly before her end ; in page 520 is a photograph showing her last moments.

Photo, Associated Press

have to be assured. And meanwhile the French would not remain passive behind their wall. When and if the German divisions crossed the Jura into France, they would be confronted by a great host who would have all the advantages of a strong natural defensive situation. But all these schemes were conjectural.

There remained the outposts of Europe—the opposite peninsulas of Scandinavia and the Balkans. As for the first, the advantages that would accrue to Germany if her troops overran Denmark and southern Sweden might be considerable, but, as in the case of the Low Countries, they would be heavily offset. Denmark, despite her friendly feelings towards Britain, was at the same time sending Germany quantities of foodstuffs, whose supply might well be jeopardized if the little land were devastated by war. Denmark, of course, was in no position to resist German demands, and—like her neighbour Norway—had built up a social fabric on the assumption that her neutrality would be respected by powerful neighbours. Her budgets had allowed for little more than token Services for defence. She had her island colony of Greenland, with the Faroes in the North Atlantic. Then there was Iceland, under the same king but enjoying independence.

Other Menaced Lands

The position of Norway was somewhat different. Its capture would necessitate the use of Denmark as a jumping-off ground, and though its army was small a fierce resistance might be expected. There was a navy of some strength to be reckoned with, and a well organized coastal defence system at important points. By the maintenance of peaceful relations Germany had a good deal to gain in the way of trade in essential products and raw materials, while transport facilities for minerals from Sweden were highly valuable.

Sweden was stronger than either Norway or Denmark, and had an army of about half a million trained reservists who could be quickly mobilized, besides a standing force of 25,000. Her navy also was considerable, being strong in small craft for coastal defence. The rich deposits of first-class iron ore were shipped in large quantity to Britain and Germany, and were especially necessary to the Nazis, who had no other available source of this particular mineral. The preservation of good relations with Germany was incumbent on the Swedish Government for reasons of finance and security. Moreover, since the Nazi-Soviet Pact, Sweden had still greater reason to walk warily.

The Balkans might seem to offer Germany a field where a short, sharp war would bring immense material benefits to the Reich. Rumania might seem a tempting morsel—Rumania, who lay on the direct route from Central Europe to the Black Sea and so on to the fabled Orient ; Rumania, fat with territory taken from Hungary and Russia and Bulgaria in one or other of the many wars that have distracted the Balkan peninsula since, a year or two before the Great War, the Slavs marched to overthrow the rotting fabric of Abdul Hamid's Turkey. Germany was on good terms with Hungary—had she not acquiesced in the latter's appropriation of Ruthenia when the Czechoslovak state fell into ruin ?—and it might well be that the close military alliance of 1914 might be recreated with manifest advantage to both parties.

The position was complicated, however, by the threatened intervention of Russia. Bessarabia, Rumania's eastern province, was part of the Tsar's realm until, on the collapse of the regime in 1917, it was incorporated in the Rumanian kingdom. The cession was never acknowledged by the Soviet authorities, and for years the relations of Rumania and Russia were exacerbated by the Bessarabian question. If Germany marched on Rumania, either, with Hungary's acquiescence and assistance, through Ruthenia or across the Carpathians from Nazi Poland, she might find that Russia and Bulgaria—always particularly pan-Slav and hence pro-Russian—had seized the opportunity to make a snatch at Bessarabia and the Dobrudja, thus preventing Germany from achieving actual access to the Black Sea.

Of course, the two great Powers might agree to become associates in the campaign of conquest, just as they did in Poland in the autumn of 1939. Even so, however, there had to be taken into account a number of factors, any of which might have far-reaching influence on the turn of events. There was, in the first place, a large and powerfully-equipped Rumanian army—its peacetime strength was some 200,000 men—led by a man who had proved himself to be both capable and resolute. Time after time King Carol had asserted that, in effect, Rumania's motto was " What we have, we hold," and not all the efforts of the statesmen of the " revisionist " countries had induced him to budge an inch from his oft-declared determination to resist any and every invasion to the last. Then there was the attitude of the other Balkan countries, particularly of Yugoslavia, Turkey, and Greece, Rumania's partners in the Balkan Entente ; they might be expected to rally to her assistance if she were seriously attacked.

Finally, what of Italy ? For years past the government of Signor Mussolini had made it plain that they regarded the Balkans as being within Italy's sphere of influence, and it was no secret that Italian diplomacy was unresting in its endeavour to smooth away the differences that divided the Balkan States, with a view to uniting them in a firm alliance—political, military and economic—with Fascist Italy.

Diary of the War

DECEMBER, 1939

December 1, 1939. Soviet sets up puppet "Finnish People's Government" at Terijoki, in Karelian Isthmus. Finnish communiqué claims that all Russian attacks have been repulsed along south-eastern frontier and nearly all in Isthmus. British steamer "Dalryan" and Finnish steamer "Mercator" mined. Norwegian vessel "Realf" reported sunk.

December 2. Finnish Cabinet submit appeal to League of Nations. Reported that former Grimsby trawler has sunk U-boat off East Coast. British tanker "San Calisto" reported sunk by mine. German liner "Watussi" scuttled.

December 3. Finnish resistance to Russian advance continues. R.A.F. bombers attack German warships near Heligoland. One Messerschmitt fighter shot down. R.A.F. patrol 'plane destroys U-boat in North Sea. Reports to hand of destruction of three other U-boats and capture of fourth in Bristol Channel. Swedish steamer "Rudolf" sunk.

December 4. Finnish Government announces decision to fortify Aaland Islands. Soviet Government refuses Swedish offer of mediation on grounds that it does not recognize present Finnish Government. British steamer "Doric Star" sunk by German raider.

December 5. Finnish 'planes carry out surprise bombing attack on Soviet air base at Murmansk. British steamer "Horsted" sunk by U-boat. British liner "Navasota" torpedoed and sunk.

December 6. Finns retreat to main line of defence in Karelian Isthmus Enemy activity during night off East Coast of Britain. Nazi machine seen off Orkneys. Two Dornier seaplanes attacked over North Sea by Coastal Patrol. R.A.F. make successful flight over North Germany. H.M. trawler "Washington" sunk. German ship "Ussukuma" captured. Greek steamer "Paralos" sunk in Thames estuary. Danish steamer "Ove Toft" mined in North Sea.

December 7. Fierce fighting in Petsamo district. Nine enemy aircraft driven off by R.A.F. fighters from Firth of Forth area, five being hit. Two enemy machines engaged off North-East Coast; one hit. H.M.S. "Jersey" damaged by U-boat (later destroyed) but reaches port. Polish submarines "Wilk" and "Orzel" escape from Baltic and join British Navy. British steamer "Thomas Walton" sunk. Dutch freighter "Tajandoen" and Norwegian tanker "Britta" sunk.

December 8. Coastal Command 'plane sinks U-boat by bombing. Enemy aircraft approach East Coast by night but are driven off. British cargo-boat "Merel" sunk by enemy action.

December 9. Finns repulse new attacks in Karelian Isthmus. Fierce fighting along line Kuolajärvi-Suomussalmi-Kuhmo. British steamers "Brandon" and "Corea" sunk. German steamer "Henning Oldendorff" captured.

December 10. Russian attack in Finnish "waist-line" area making slow progress. H.M. drifter "Ray of Hope" mined. Four neutral ships reported sunk: Swedish steamer "Vinga," Dutch motor-ship "Immingham," Danish collier "Scotia," and Norwegian steamer "Gimle." Estonian "Kassa" torpedoed.

December 11. Finns claim recapture of Suomussalmi. League of Nations urges Soviet Union to cease from hostilities within 24 hours. British steamer "Willowpool" mined. Greek steamer "Garoufalia" torpedoed. Four British steamers—"Ashlea," "Newton Beech," "Huntsman" and "Trevanion"—overdue and considered lost.

December 12. Soviet Government refuses League of Nations' offer to mediate in Russo-Finnish conflict. Russians gain ground in Central Finland. Nazi attacks on Western Front repulsed. British ships "King Egbert" and "Marwick Head" sunk. Swedish steamer "Toroe" mined.

December 13. H.M. cruisers "Achilles," "Ajax" and "Exeter" attack German pocket battleship "Admiral Graf Spee" in South Atlantic. "Exeter" is damaged and falls out. "Graf Spee" takes refuge in Montevideo harbour. Coastal Command 'planes damage two Dornier aircraft over North Sea. R.A.F. fighters intercept raiders off East Coast of Scotland. U-boat sunk and Nazi cruiser torpedoed by British submarine ("Salmon"). Finns claim recapture of Salla and success north of Lake Ladoga.

December 14. Soviet Union expelled from League of Nations. Air battle over Heligoland Bight: five Messerschmitts shot down; R.A.F. lose three machines. H.M. trawler "William Hallet" mined. New Russian drive in Petsamo region.

December 15. R.A.F. machines bomb enemy seaplane bases at Borkum, Norderney and Sylt. Finns withdraw from Salmijärvi in Arctic after destroying nickel mines. H.M. trawler "James Ludford" mined. British tanker "Inverlane" reported mined. Belgian steamer "Rosa" and Norwegian steamer "Foeina" sunk. German ships "Duesseldorf" and "Adolf Leonhardt" scuttled.

December 16. Successful Finnish counter-drive in Suomussalmi district and north of Lake Ladoga. One British and four neutral ships reported mined: British steamer "Amble," Norwegian steamers "Ragni" and "H. C. Flood," Swedish vessel "Ursis," Greek steamer "Germaine." German ship "Teneriffe" scuttled.

December 17. "Graf Spee" scuttled in River Plate. Enemy aircraft appear off British coast. R.A.F. carry out further raids over German seaplane bases. Finns stand fast in Karelian Isthmus and "waist-line" area. First contingent of Canadian forces land in Britain. British motor-ship "Serenity" and trawler "New Choice" sunk by bombs and guns from Nazi 'planes.

December 18. Fierce air battle over Heligoland Bight. Twelve Messerschmitts shot down; seven British bombers lost. H.M. submarine "Ursula" sinks German cruiser of Köln class. New Soviet attacks in Isthmus and also on Arctic front.

December 19. Further Russian advance in north-east Finland. Helsinki and other coastal towns bombed. German liner "Columbus" scuttled. British steamer "City of Kobe" sunk. Three neutral ships reported sunk: Norwegian steamer "Glitrejell," Danish steamers "Jytte" and "Bogoe." Captain Langsdorff, of "Graf Spee," commits suicide.

December 20. Heavy Russian attack in Karelian Isthmus repulsed. Paris announces two more U-boats sunk by French Fleet. Swedish steamers "Mars" and "Adolf Bratt" sunk by mines.

December 21. Helsinki and other open towns bombed. Finns counter-attack at Kemijärvi and drive Russians back 20 miles. Successes also claimed north of Lake Ladoga and in Isthmus. Italian ship "Comitas" mined.

December 22. Finns compel Russians to retreat in Petsamo and Salla districts and launch counter-attack in Karelian Isthmus. R.A.F. fighters engage enemy aircraft off Firth of Forth. Four Messerschmitts attack three Hurricane fighters over Western Front; two British and one German machine shot down.

December 23. Russian troops retreat in Karelian Isthmus, in Petsamo region and in Salla sector. Admiralty announces laying of mine barrage nearly full length of East Coast.

December 24. Finnish storm battalions cross Russian frontier near Lieksa after routing Russians in Tolvajärvi and Aglajärvi districts.

December 25. Finnish advance maintained. Extensive Soviet air raids over Helsinki, Viipuri, Tampere and Turku. British steamer "Stanholme" torpedoed.

December 26. Finns maintain positions near Salla. Enemy attacks in Isthmus repulsed. First squadron of Royal Australian Air Force lands in England. Three more neutral ships reported sunk: the Swedish "Carl Henkel," Norwegian "Lappen," and Spanish "Perez."

December 27. On Salla front Finns press enemy back some 50 miles towards frontier. R.A.F. engage in series of fights over North Sea with German air and surface craft.

December 28. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting on frozen Suvanto river near Mannerheim Line. Finns claim to have wiped out two companies. H.M. trawler "Loch Doon" reported lost. Danish steamer "Hanne" mined.

December 29. Finnish "Suicide Company" of 250 picked ski troops reported to have damaged Leningrad-Murmansk railway at three points. British steamer "Moortoft" reported sunk. British trawler "Resercho" mined.

December 30. Finnish northern armies destroy Russian division of 15,000 men near Lake Kianta, in "waist-line" area, after week-long battle. Russians launch new attack against Mannerheim Line. French warship sinks U-boat.

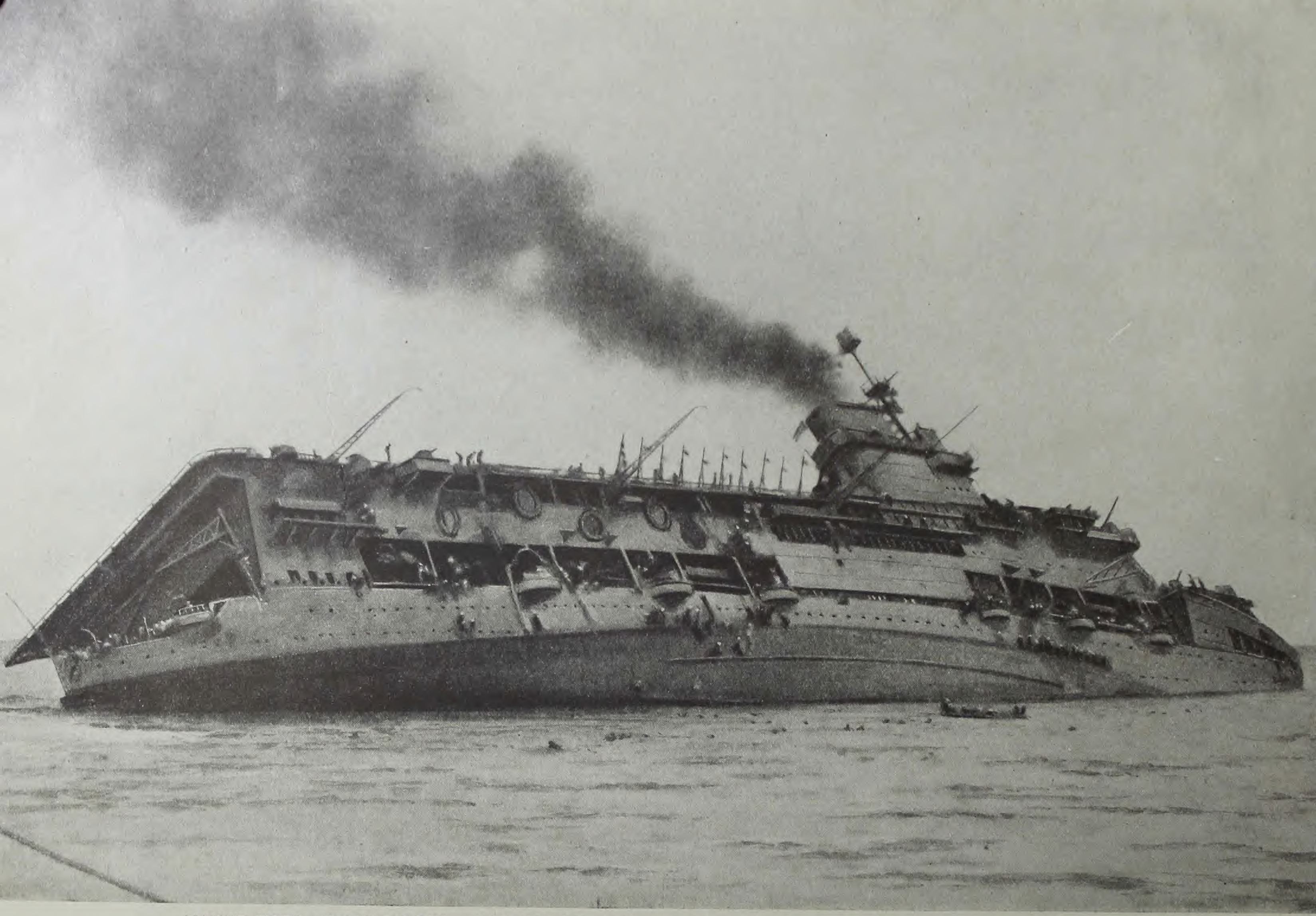
December 31. Eleven Finnish towns raided. Finns launch successful counter-attack in Salla sector. Continuous heavy fighting in Karelian Isthmus.



NAZI LINER LEFT TO HER FATE

Abandoned by her crew, some of whom are in a lifeboat alongside, the Nazi luxury liner 'Columbus' is seen above after having been set on fire by her crew in order to avoid capture by the British destroyer seen in the background. To make doubly sure of the destruction of the liner the crew had opened the seacocks before taking to their boats. Another photograph of the scuttled 'Columbus' is given in page 308.

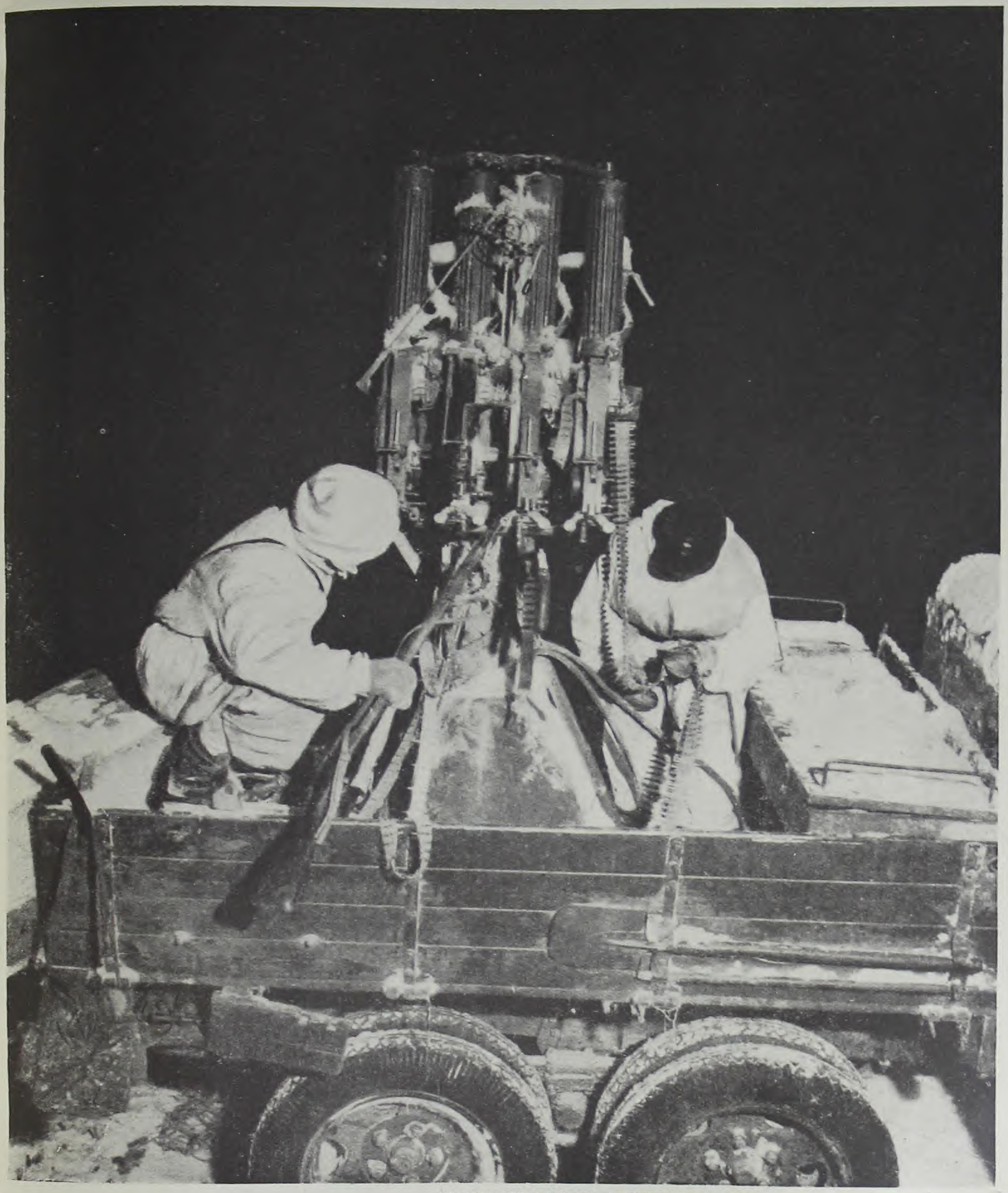
Photo, Keystone



NAVY'S FIRST U-BOAT VICTIM—'COURAGEOUS' GOES TO HER GRAVE

Struck amidships by a torpedo from a German submarine while on patrol on September 17, 1939, the aircraft-carrier H.M.S. 'Courageous' sank within a very short time. Here men are seen scrambling down her side into the water, but though the order to abandon ship was given five minutes after the vessel had been struck, the commander, Captain Makeig-Jones, remained on the bridge to the end and went down with his ship.

Photo, Exclusive to THE SECOND GREAT WAR



FINNS EXAMINE USEFUL BOOTY

After the Finnish success at Raatevaara, south-east of Suomussalmi, when the Russian 44th Division was completely routed, an enormous quantity of valuable material fell into Finnish hands. The photograph above, taken by flashlight in the Arctic night, shows Finns examining one of the sixteen quadruple anti-aircraft machine-guns of German manufacture, which they captured.

Photo, Press Topics



PRISONERS FROM A ROUTED RUSSIAN DIVISION

After the great Finnish victory around Raate, early in January, 1940, when the Russian 44th Division was almost annihilated, vast numbers of prisoners were taken by the Finns. Some of them are seen above on parade, behind the Finnish lines. By this success and the routing of the Russian 163rd Division in December, 1939, the defenders had removed the threat to Finland's 'waistline.'

Photo, Topical

Chapter 50

FINLAND'S SECOND MONTH OF WAR: RUSSIANS CHECKED AND TWO DIVISIONS ROUTED

Russian Losses in Costly Frontal Attacks—Fierce Fighting in Taipale Sector—Russians Routed on the Suomussalmi Front—Soviet 44th Division Smashed—How Disaster Overtook the Russian 163rd Division—Arrival of Foreign Volunteers to Aid Finland

REPEATED unsuccessful Russian assaults by land in several sectors of the 1,000-mile Finnish-Russian frontier, and the arrival of foreign aid in the form of volunteers and supplies for the sorely-pressed Finns, were the outstanding features of the second month of the war in the frozen North. As yet the pattern of Soviet strategy could not be clearly discerned, though it appeared that the Russians aimed at causing a dispersal of Finland's forces by multi-point attacks on the eight main fronts.

As in the first month of hostilities, the Finnish Mannerheim Line remained the backbone of Finland's resistance. Notable Finnish successes were scored on two fronts farther north, but it was against the Mannerheim Line that the Russians directed their most intensive efforts, countered by equally obstinate resistance on the part of the Finns. In the early days of January it was estimated that 300,000 Red Army men, including the crack "Proletarian Brigade," were opposing 100,000 Finns on the Karelian Isthmus.

Alarmed by their continuous reverses in December, the Russians made an attempt to take the fortified Finnish positions by a frontal attack of great intensity on January 2. The story of the previous month repeated itself. The Finns, firing from behind trees, from pill boxes and concealed batteries, played havoc with the enemy. Boulders rolled on to the frozen forest paths made natural tank barriers, against which the Russian mechanical monsters pushed in vain. When, appalled by their losses, the Russians developed night attacks, the Finns also developed counter-methods. They installed batteries of powerful searchlights at convenient points. As the Russians advanced, very often over frozen lakes, the searchlights caught and dazzled them, and Finnish soldiers brought their automatic rifles to their hips and mowed them down. So it was that the lakes of the Karelian Isthmus were covered with the frozen bodies of Red Army men.

The January Attacks

On the night of January 5 mysterious explosions on the Russian side of the lakes baffled the Finns. Patrols were sent out to investigate. They brought back the heartening news that the Russians were digging themselves in. Trenches were being blasted in the frozen ground scarcely 500 yards from the Finnish positions in the centre of the Isthmus. To many observers it seemed that the Russians were going to wait until spring. The Finns christened the Russian defences the "Molotov Line," and Finnish infantrymen, some of whom had not had a rest since the war began, looked forward to a period of quiet, in which they could reinforce their capacities for a spring offensive.

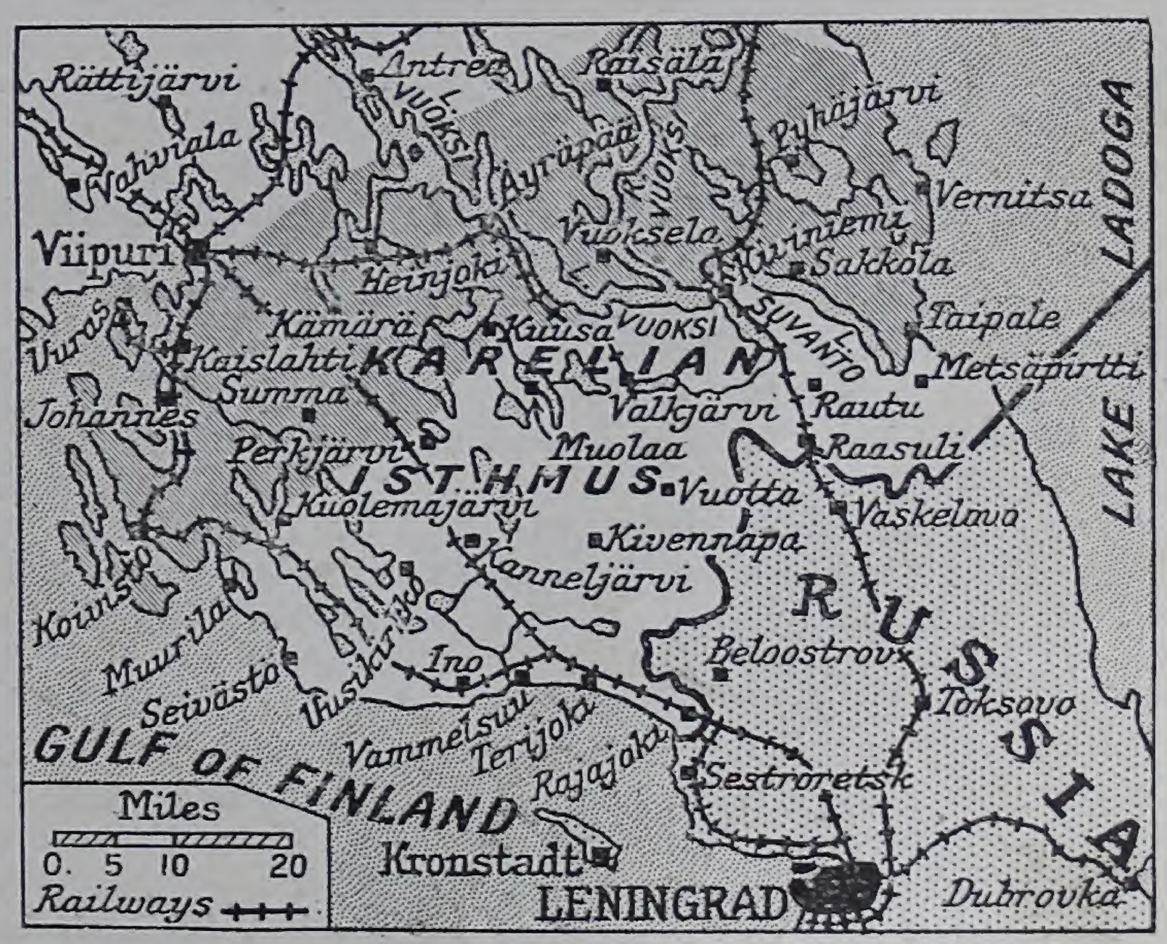
But this hope was shortlived. It speedily became apparent that the Russians were only reinforcing their centre in order to give them greater freedom of movement on the wings. The eight-fold invasion of Finland was making great demands on the Russian supply organizations. For a week there was unusual quiet on the Isthmus, while the Russians completed their defence works, the only diversion being the bombardment of Viipuri, headquarters of the Finnish Karelian Isthmus Command, by Russian eight-inch naval guns.

Then the storm broke. The Seventh Russian Army Corps launched fierce attacks against Taipale, the most easterly sector of the Mannerheim Line, and less intense attacks at other points. The Russians penetrated into the woods around the mouth of the Taipale River. For days there was fierce hand-to-hand fighting, in which both Russians and Finns lost heavily. But the invaders were thrown back.

A breathing spell for the Finns ensued, which the Russians used to bring up more artillery and ammunition. On January 22 the Taipale sector was subjected to the fiercest bombardment of the war. Shells crashed into the Finnish forest positions at the rate of three and four a second. Trees were uprooted. Huge craters appeared and it seemed that no one could live in the inferno.

When, however, the Russians, advancing behind tanks, made another attempt to cross the river, the woods again sprang to life. Shells and dynamite blew huge holes in the ice in the path of the invaders. Finnish infantry, ensconced in the fringes of the woods along the banks of the Taipale, caught the Russians in a devastating cross-fire. With great courage, however, the Red Army men came over in wave after wave. They again obtained a foothold in the woods on the northern bank of the river. Again there was fierce hand-to-hand fighting, in which the Finns, using hand grenades, distinguished themselves. But by January 23 the attack on Taipale was smashed. The left wing of the Mannerheim Line was intact, and the Russians had lost several thousand men and numerous tanks.

Taipale Offensive



WAR FRONT ON THE KARELIAN ISTHMUS

This map shows the Karelian Isthmus, where the Russians hurled vast masses of men against the Finnish defences in an effort to reach the important port of Viipuri. The shaded area denotes the Mannerheim Line position as it was up to the end of January, 1940, before the Russians succeeded in breaking through the right flank.





TWO FACTORS WHICH CHECKED THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE

On the left two Finnish soldiers are seen with one of the Finnish Army's new automatic rifles. This weapon, which fires 80 rounds a minute, can be used by one man, and the Finns found it very effective in checking the Russian onslaughts. On the right are some of the Finnish tank obstacles in front of the Mannerheim Line : great granite boulders embedded in the earth. They caused the Russians great losses in tanks.

Photos, Planet News ; Associated Press

Such continued losses seemed to have enforced a pause on the Red Army Command. The defenders of the Isthmus enjoyed comparative peace for the rest of the month.

It is well to recall here that there are two branches of the Mannerheim Line. One branch, based on the water system of the Vuoksi River, traverses the Karelian Isthmus. The other branch extends from Taipale to Sortavala, thus covering the greater part of the western and northern banks of Lake Ladoga in Finnish territory.

Two avenues were open to the Russians in their attempts to invade southern Finland by land. The first was to penetrate the Mannerheim Line across the Isthmus, attempts which, owing largely to the 20-mile-deep series of Finnish fortifications, had been fruitless. If, however, the Russians could skirt the northern and western banks of Lake Ladoga, they would be able to take the defenders of the Isthmus in the rear, in which case retreat would be their only alternative to annihilation or surrender. The Finns, as related in chapter 41, had not attempted to make a stand on their frontier with Russia where it meets the north-eastern bank of Lake Ladoga. On this front, the so-called Salmi front, the Finns had retired to prepared positions some 40 miles inside their frontier at the Koirinoja River.

Late in the month of January 1940, the Russians pushed forward past Salmi to the township of Kitela, only 30 miles east of Sortavala, terminus of the Ladoga branch of the Mannerheim Line. The territory here is low-lying and afforested, with the additional advantage for the defenders that many of the islands along the coast are excellent natural strongholds. Especially was this true of the island of Mantsinaari, south of Kitela, which had been fortified by the Finns and had defied repeated efforts at capture.

Russian operations along the northern bank of Lake Ladoga towards Sortavala were continuously hampered by the fire of Finnish guns on Mantsinaari Island. Otherwise the Russian preparations for their push to the west were exceedingly thorough. They used their artillery unsparingly to prepare the infantry advance. In one place near Kitela it is estimated that 15,000 shells fell in an area of one and a half square miles. The snow was so blackened by the explosive shells that the Finns had to discard the white coats which they had been using as camouflage. Many Finnish machine-gun posts were buried.

The possession of Kitela was vital to the Russians in their effort to turn the Mannerheim Line, and no fewer than two divisions of the Red Army were stated to be employed in this operation. For two days, on January 28 and 29, the battle raged in the shell-torn forests. Meanwhile, the guns of Mantsinaari Island continued to bombard the Russian communications, although the gallant garrison was now in the rear of the Russian invaders, and Finnish ski-soldiers worked their way round the northern flanks of the Russian divisions. Four tanks, 150 prisoners, and 50 machine-guns fell to the Finns as a result of the fighting, which cost the Russians 800 dead in one day alone.

At the end of two months' fighting the Finnish High Command seemed satisfied with the position in this sector. Although no crushing defeat had been inflicted on the invader as at Suojärvi in December, the Russians were firmly held in inhospitable country with long supply lines to maintain. At no time had this key to the Ladoga branch of the Mannerheim Line been seriously



WHERE REDS DROPPED BOMBS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Viipuri (Viborg), the important port on the Gulf of Finland, was intensively bombed by Soviet aircraft during the Russo-Finnish war. In the upper photograph is a view of the city as it was in peacetime ; in the foreground is the great flour-mill of the S.O.K. Co-operative Society. Below is a photograph of the bombing of Viipuri on Christmas Day, 1939. The town was handed over to the Russians on the conclusion of peace in March, 1940.

Photos, L.N.A.; Associated Press



HERE A BATTLE WAS FOUGHT IN ARCTIC WEATHER

Above, a Finnish soldier, in white snow camouflage uniform, is examining a Soviet aeroplane forced down into a forest during the battle at Suomussalmi. Below, the frozen ruins of buildings in the town of Suomussalmi testify to the bitterness of the weather during the battle.

Photos, Associated Press; Wide World



threatened, in spite of the immense Russian numerical superiority.

From Sortavala as far as Suomussalmi, half-way between Lake Ladoga and the Arctic Ocean, no important military operations occurred in January. The Russians had not yet recovered from their earlier reverse at Suojärvi, but there were some indications that the Lakes of Tolva and Agla, so tragic for the fate of the Red Army, would again feature in the history of hostilities. A Russian sortie in the neighbourhood of these lakes at the end of January was not taken seriously by the Finns, who rightly assumed that it was a Russian move to avert the pressure on their two divisions at Kitela, some 50 miles to the south-west.

Leaving the Finnish ski patrols watching the Russian invaders on the two next sectors in the north—Lieksa and Kuhmo—we can turn our attention to the third sector, the Suomussalmi front, where Finnish arms in January provided a welcome tonic for the civilians of Finland, suffering so heavily from the Red air terror.

Battle of Suomussalmi

The Finnish operations took place near Raate, a village on the Russo-Finnish frontier, directly south-east of Suomussalmi, and resulted in their greatest victory over the invaders since the war began. The Russian 44th Division of between 15,000 and 18,000 men was smashed in the battle of Raate in the first week of January.

Following as it did the great Finnish victory on the same front in December, the Finnish success at Raate put an end for some weeks at least to Russia's attempts to cut Finland's "waist" at its narrowest point.

Historians may refer to the battle at Lake Kianta, on which Suomussalmi is situated, in December, and that at Raate in early January, as two separate victories. In reality, however, both victories were phases of the same action. The victory of Lake Kianta would have been incomplete without the later victory in the battle of Raate, for the Russian threat to the "waistline" at Suomussalmi would have still remained, although it would have been less menacing.

In their attempts to cut Finland's waistline—an operation which, had it succeeded, would have separated Finland's northern and southern armies—the Russians made two separate thrusts in the direction of Suomussalmi. Troops of the Russian 47th Army Corps were employed, with Uhtua, on the Leningrad-Murmansk railway, as base. Of these troops, the 163rd Soviet Division and a

regiment of the 164th Division used the road from Uhtua to the Finnish frontier and then marched in a northerly direction in an effort to round the shores of Lake Kianta and turn south. They hoped thus to approach Suomussalmi from the north. The Russian 44th Division set out at the same time, but the object of this division was to approach Suomussalmi from the south, linking up with the 163rd Division when Suomussalmi had fallen.

The Finns, with only one division on the Suomussalmi front with which to face two Russian divisions, had at all costs to prevent these divisions uniting. Under Colonel Siilasvuo, therefore, they decided to split their forces. One section held up the Russian 44th Division advancing from the south. The other Finnish troops, as was related in Chapter 41 (page 450), fell on the 163rd Division to the north at Lake Kianta after cutting its supply lines, and annihilated it.

Now the whole Finnish force could be combined to settle accounts with the 44th Division.

One of the mysteries of the new disaster which now befell the Russians is, why the commander of the 44th Division did not advance to the relief of the Russian 163rd Division when it was attacked a fortnight earlier. It has been suggested that jealousy existed between the commanders of the Russian divisions, and observers recalled that discord between Russian commanders had led to the great Russian rout by Hindenburg at Tannenberg in the First Great War.

A more probable explanation is that the 44th Division, harassed by the exceedingly mobile and elusive Finns, either over-estimated the forces arrayed against it, or else was unaware of the fate befalling its fellow fighters a few miles to the north. Be that as it may, the commander of the Russian 44th Division set his troops in motion from Raate in the direction of Suomussalmi when it was too late to avert disaster to the 163rd Division.

Russians Move Too Late

The Finnish tactics were superb. Lake Kianta becomes very narrow at the point where the village of Suomussalmi (Suomu Straits) is situated, and then widens again to the south. A bridge connects the straits. After the destruction of the 163rd Russian Division the Finns permitted some men of the 44th Division to cross this bridge. Then, when the 44th Division had split its forces, one-half to the west of the straits and the other half waiting to cross, Finnish patrols slipped silently up in the night to the bridge and blew it up.

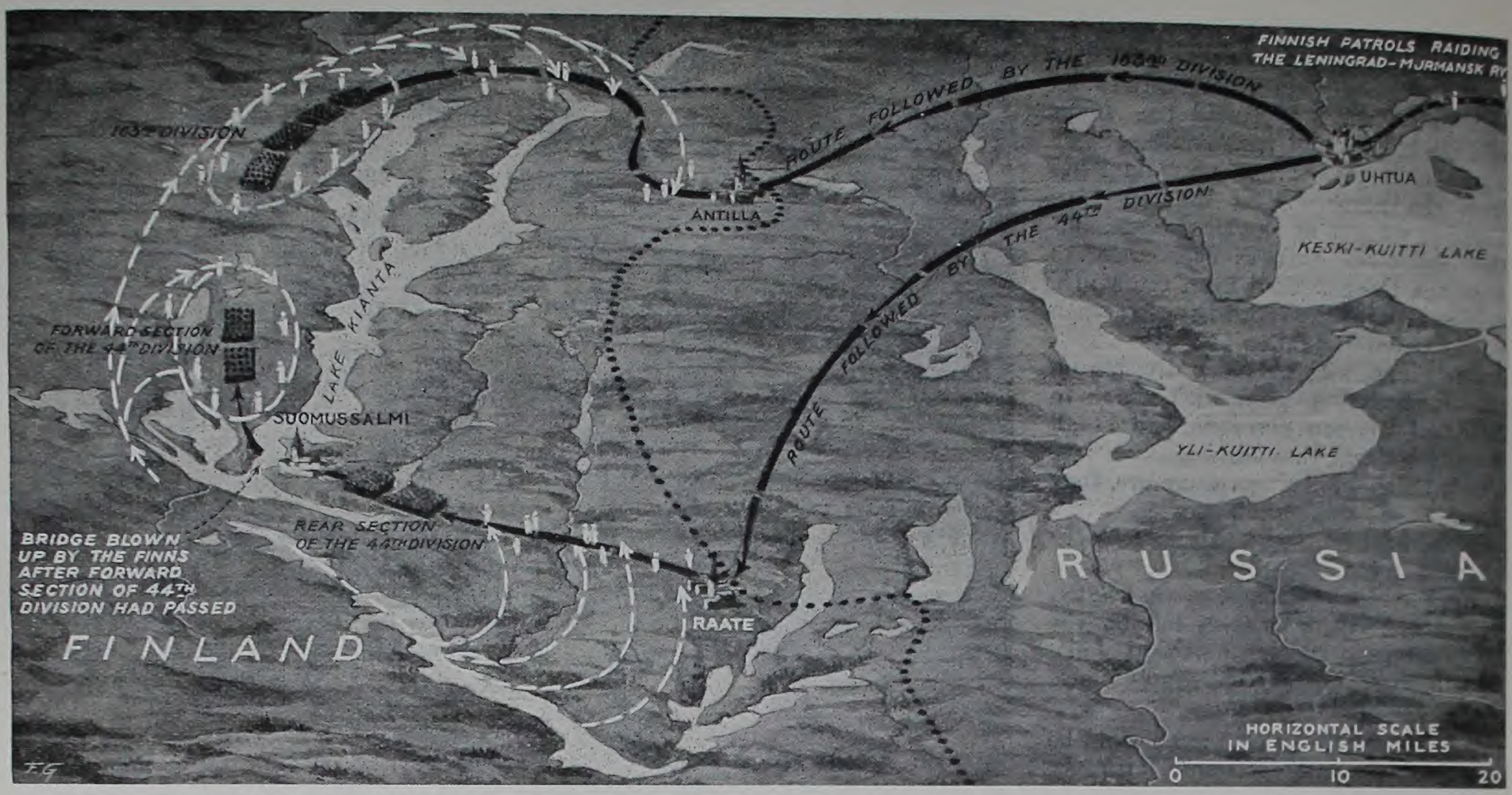


MEN AND MATERIAL CAPTURED BY FINNS

Finnish ski patrols played a great part in the victory at Suomussalmi, and above some of them are seen returning to the lines with Russian prisoners. Below are tractors which formed part of the booty captured by the Finns. A dead Russian is seen lying amid scattered equipment.

Photos, Associated Press; Planet News

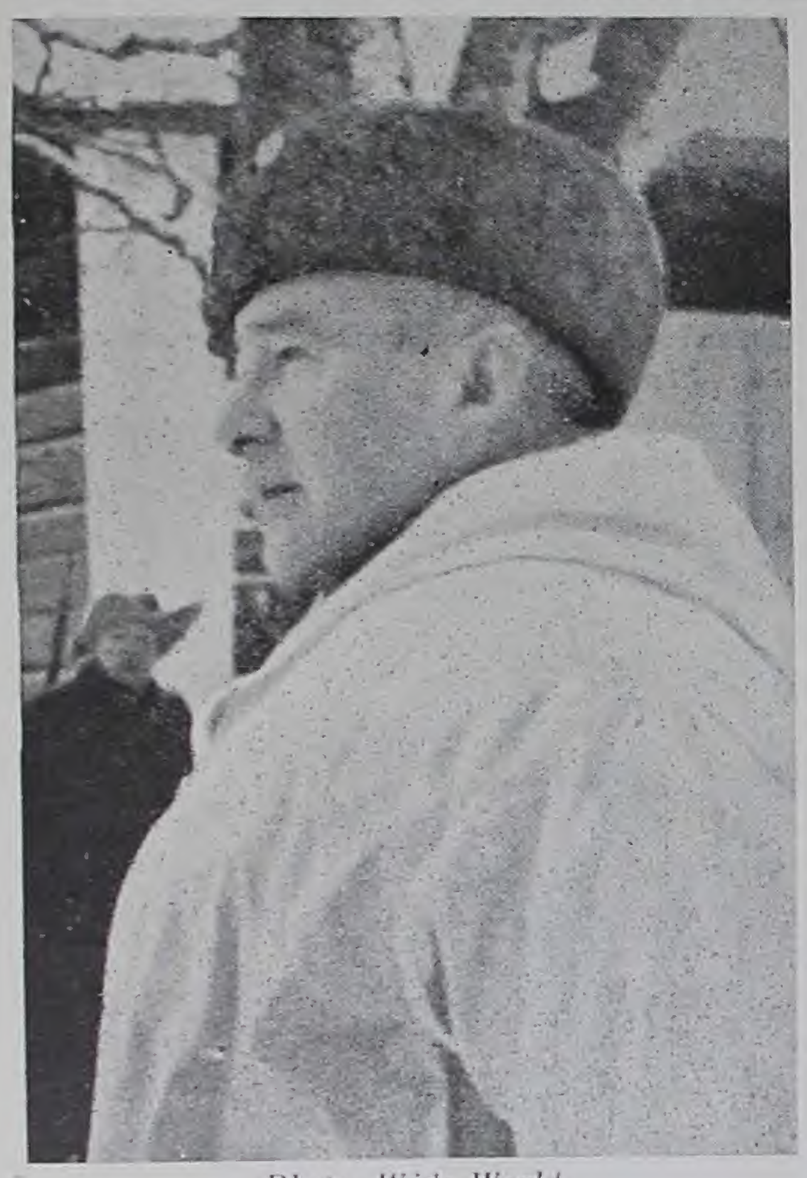




SUOMUSSALMI SPELT SUCCESS FOR THE FINNS

The twofold Russian drive for Suomussalmi began late in December, 1939. Bewildered and outmanoeuvred by the masterly tactics of the greatly outnumbered Finns under Colonel Siilasvuo (left), the two Soviet divisions engaged sustained crushing defeat. In this pictorial explanation of the operations, the main lines of the Russian advance are shown in black, and the Finnish encircling movements in white.

Specially drawn for THE SECOND GREAT WAR *by Felix Gardon*



Photo, Wide World

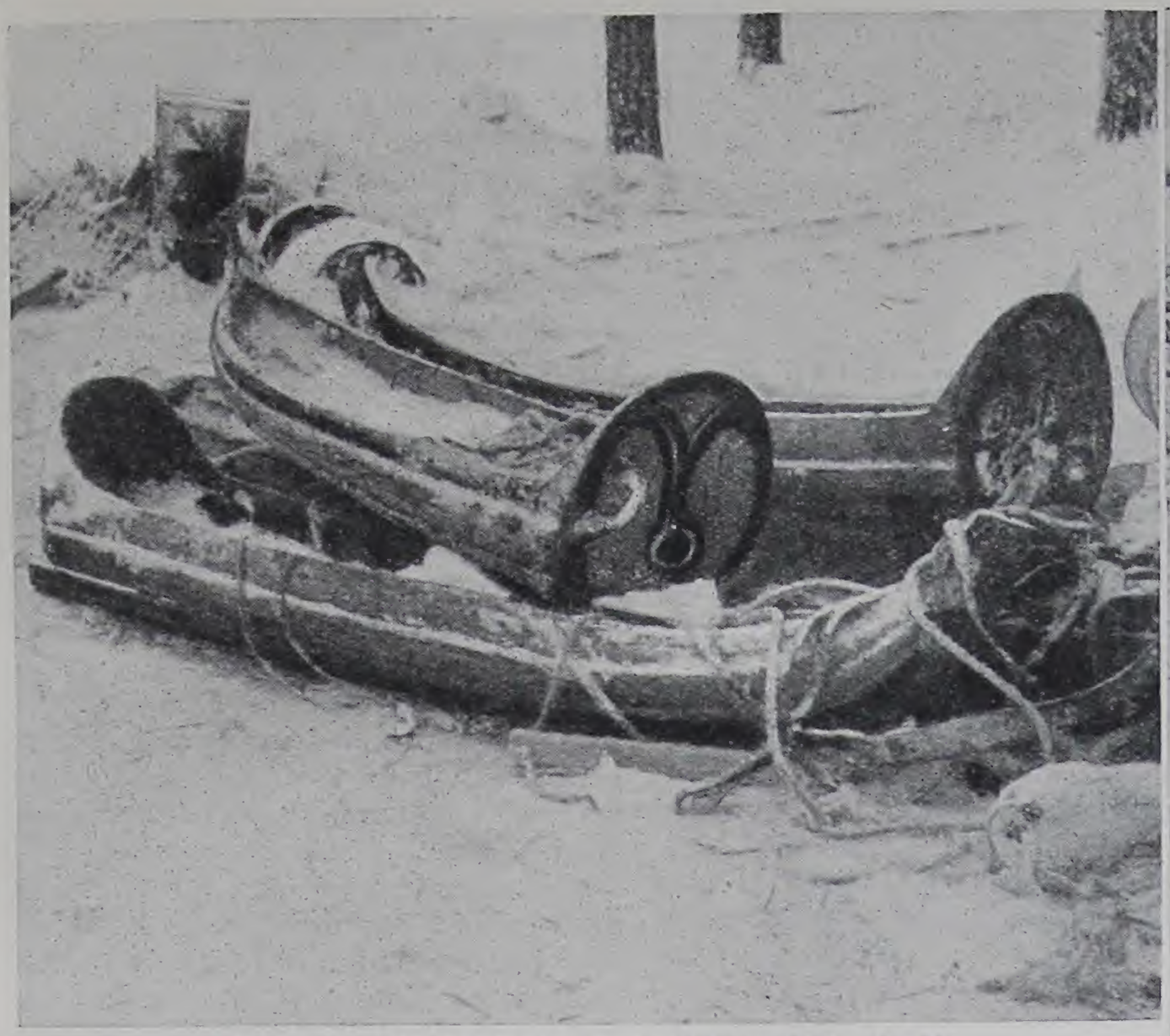
The Russians who had crossed were able neither to advance nor retreat, and at the same time Finnish patrols in the forests began ambushing the Soviet soldiers on both sides of the Straits.

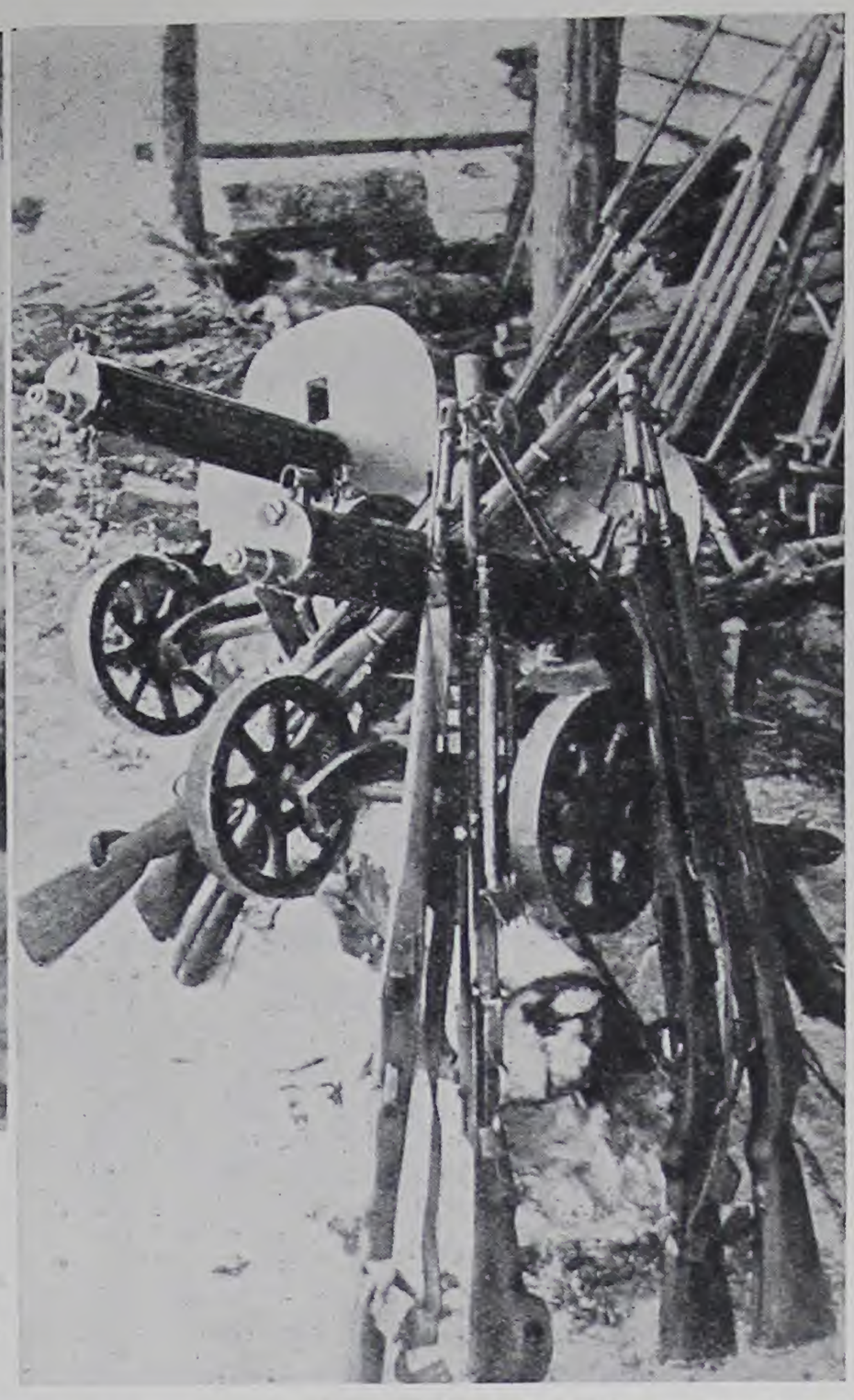
Although the position of the Russians who had crossed the blown-up bridge was hopeless from the start, those who had not crossed had still their communications with their bases. The Finns then carried through another masterly tactical move. For a large part of its length the road from the Russian frontier to Suomussalmi runs parallel to frozen lakes. The Finns built a road on the ice of the lakes, worked to the rear of the Russian troops, and established themselves athwart the Russian supply lines, holding up effectually reinforcements which were being hurried from Uhtua.

The greater part of the Russian Division was encamped in an area not greater than four miles by two and a half miles. Tins of rations were dropped by Soviet airmen on the beleaguered troops, but the airmen could not cope with the immensity of their task. For a whole week the Finnish patrols harassed the Russians, darting in and machine-gunning them, then disappearing without having been seen. Numbed by the bitter Arctic weather and with their supplies exhausted, the Russians were in a desperate situation at the end of seven days. Then the Finns closed in. Disaster became complete. More than 1,000 prisoners were taken, and the enormous Finnish booty included 102 guns, 43 tanks, 10 armoured cars, 20 tractors, 278 motor vehicles and 1,170 horses.

These figures, however, give but a small idea of the Russian losses. One four-mile stretch of road has been described as a vast junk heap, with hardly an inch of track free of dead horses, Russian killed, and abandoned vehicles. More than 7,000 dead were left on the road and in its immediate neighbourhood. Another 10,000 Red soldiers were wandering aimlessly, facing death by exhaustion or capture in the ice-bound woods. A 30-ton Russian tank, wrecked by fire from captured Russian anti-tank guns, stood amid blood-spattered machine-guns at one point on the road. Behind the tank were hundreds of Russian dead, who had sought to take shelter from the frontal fire of the Finns, but were mown down by flanking fire from the forest.

The Finns paid tribute to the courage of their opponents. For seven hours from 9.30 p.m. on Friday, January 5, when the Finns launched their final attack, firing out of the darkness from behind trees on the Russian columns of men and horses, Russian gunners fired back. They were composed of Ukrainian troops, some of the best of Russian fighters. Piles of empty shell cases beside the Russian guns testified to their desperate courage. Although many of them were half frozen, having slept on the open road night after night, they fought to the end. A Finnish colonel described them as excellent men, most of them well trained, particularly the machine-gunners and artillerymen. The difficulties of the Russians were





CURIOUS EQUIPMENT OF THE RED ARMY

The equipment captured from the Russians during the Finnish war proved to be a curious mixture of modern and obsolete. In transport vehicles especially there were amazing contrasts between old and new. Our photographs show : top left, the pulkka, a strange, sledge-like vehicle of the Lapps, used by Soviet troops to draw supplies over the snow ; top right, old-fashioned machine-guns among weapons abandoned by Soviet troops ; below right, gaping boots of a Russian prisoner, ill-equipped for fighting in the snow ; left, an almost incredible vehicle in the shape of a Russian stagecoach, fitted with an improvised aerial, and used, apparently, as a wireless transmitter.

Photos, Planet News ; Central Press







FORESTS THAT FAVOURED THE FINNS

Here is part of the battlefield at Raatevaara, with disabled Russian tanks in the background. The dense woods which abound in this district enabled swift-moving Finnish patrols to ambush many Russian detachments.

Photo, L.N.A.

simply but clearly explained by one of the prisoners taken. "Our main trouble," he said, "was that we could not see the Finns, who kept shifting their positions while we had no time to change ours. Our column was packed tight on the road with little or no rear-guard mobility. Perhaps we could have done better if we had known how to fight in this country."

Helsinki, suffering from frequent air raids, was overjoyed at the news of this third big Finnish success in five weeks of warfare. Bells were rung, flags were flown and complete strangers embraced in the streets in their excitement. The Finnish High Command, however, while not minimizing the importance of their victory, especially as it might affect their chances of resistance on the Salla front north of Suomussalmi, were careful not to overrate it. The Russians had inexhaustible supplies of men, and while the attempt to cut Finland in two at Suomussalmi had failed temporarily, they envisaged a renewed attempt in the spring.

Russian leadership at the battles of Lake Kianta, Raate and Suojärvi had proved itself lacking in skill, but that at Salla, nearly half-way between Suomussalmi and the Arctic Ocean, showed tactics of a higher order. Here the Soviet offensive was directed at Kemijärvi, the railhead at the head of the Gulf of Bothnia. It would have served the same purpose, if successful, as that at Suomussalmi, being designed to cut Finland in two across her "waist."

At the end of the first month of hostilities, it will be recalled, the Russians claimed the capture of Salla, while the Finns admitted that on this front they were up against an enemy who seemed to know the tactics of forest fighting as well as they did themselves. The Finns alleged that the Russians were employing Finnish Communist troops at Salla. Nevertheless, Finn patrols were active behind the Russian lines, and it was hoped, by cutting off the Russian supplies, to put these invaders into the same plight as had befallen the Russians farther south at Lake Kianta and Raate.

In the first week of January, 300 Russians were killed in bitter hand-to-hand fighting on the Salla front. Undeterred by ambushes and the sniping of white-clad Finn ski patrols, the Russians pushed on, and the alarming news came a few days afterwards that they had reached positions only twelve miles from Kemijärvi, the railhead at the top of the Gulf of Bothnia. By this time, however, the defeat of the Russian 44th Division at Raate, to the south, had freed Finnish troops in that area. These were hurriedly transferred to Kemijärvi, to meet the new menace.

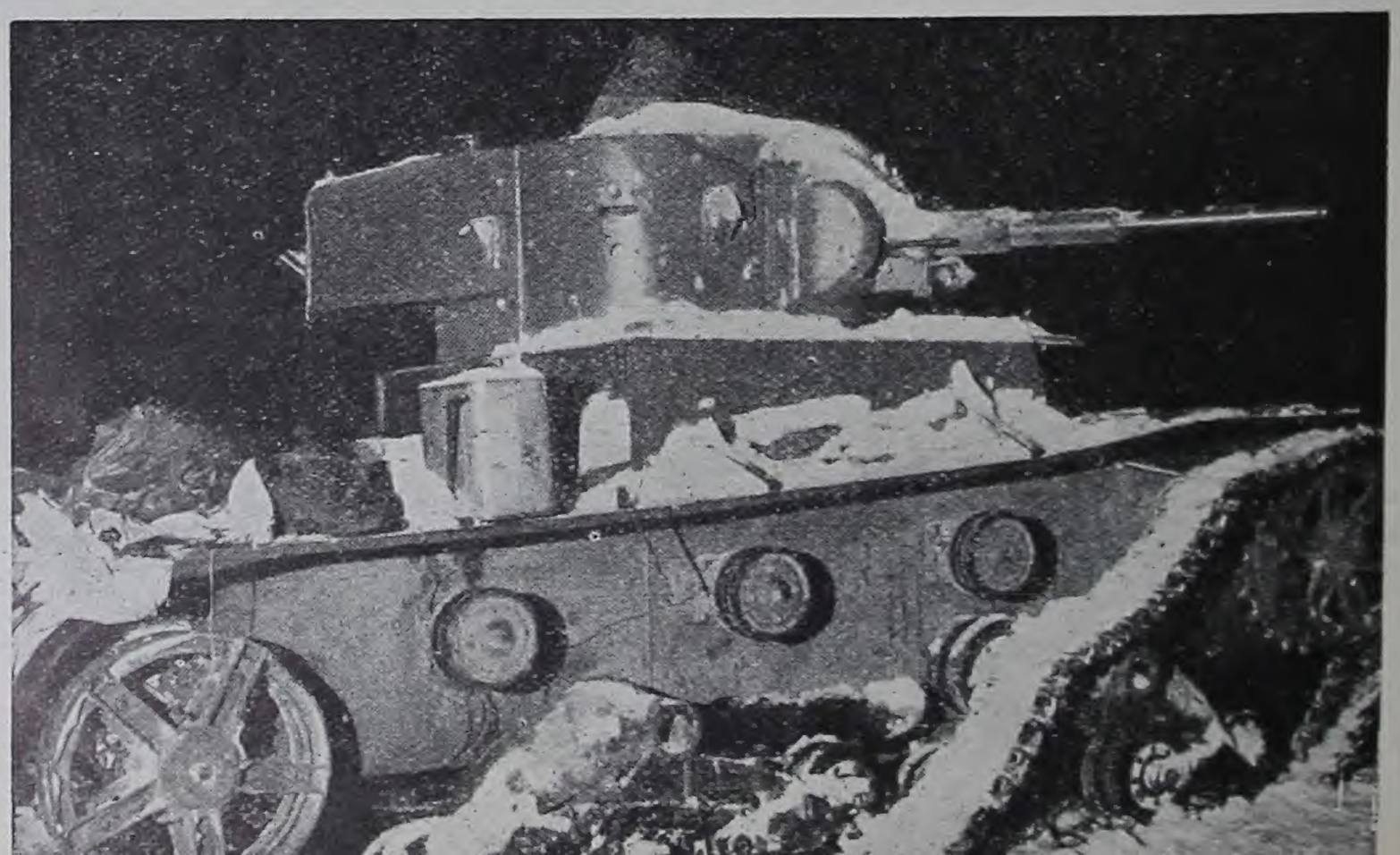
A desperate struggle ensued for three days, with frequent Russian attacks and Finnish counter-attacks. At the same time, large forces of Finnish patrols worked round the flanks of the Russian columns. Had the Russians persisted in advancing, there is no doubt that they would have courted disaster. But the Russian general in command of the two army corps ordered a swift retreat.



WHEN DAVID HELD GOLIATH AT BAY

Above is a Russian grave in the Petsamo region, marked by a Soviet star made of coins nailed on a wooden box. Below is a Russian tank captured by Finns, its caterpillar track wrenched off. Many Soviet tanks were disabled by Finns on skis, who, rushing past at great speed, would stoop and hurl a grenade into the wheels and thus rip off the track.

Photos, Planet News; Press Topics



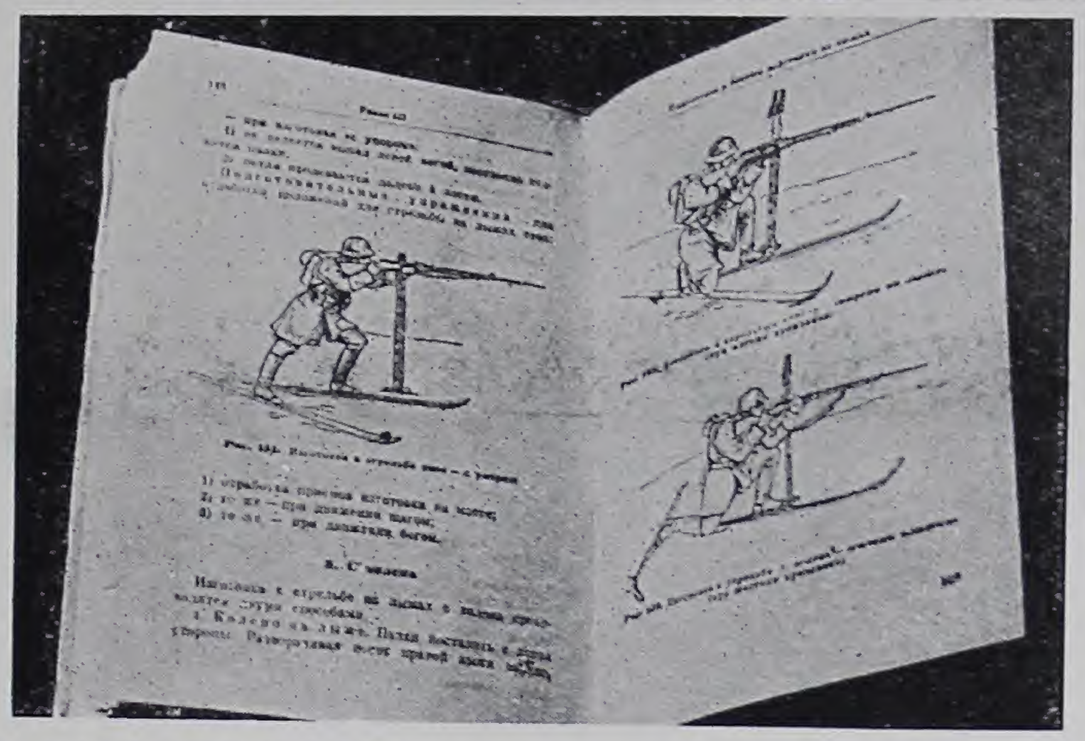
The Finns, using the excellent metalled road from Kemijärvi to the east, attacked the retreating troops relentlessly. Cold was as great an enemy of the Russians as the Finns. Lapland did not escape the cold snap which swept over Europe in the third week of January, and near Salla the temperature fell to 67 degrees below zero.

Swedish pilots helped the Finns for the first time in this sector, by bombing the Russian columns.

Nevertheless, the withdrawal of the Russians with a haste that amounted almost to panic was a great disappointment to the Finns. With a little delay on the part of the invaders, the Finns thought they would have annihilated the column and captured its supplies.

As events proved, apart from removing the threat to Kemijärvi, the Finn success was not barren. Hundreds of Russian soldiers were frozen to death. At one point 86 bodies of Red Army men lay sprawling, half-kneeling or propped against tree stumps in grotesque positions—all of them killed by Finn machine-gun bullets, fired from the opposite shore of a lake half a mile away. The sides of the road were dotted with boards, painted red, marking the last resting places of Soviet soldiers. One grave, more elaborate than the others, was inscribed to the memory of Communist soldiers "in their heroic fight against the White Finns" and had the Red Star marked by nail heads driven in the box. Polish coins were found on some of the corpses, indicating that Russian troops from Poland had been employed.





SKIS OF THE DEFEATED

These Finnish soldiers are examining skis captured from Russians defeated on the Suomussalmi front. The soldiers of the Soviet, on this sector at least, proved to be no match for the Finns in this method of locomotion.

Photos, Planet News, For

INSTRUCTION THAT CAME TOO LATE

In the photograph below Finnish officers, sitting beneath a captured portrait-banner of Stalin, are reading with amusement manuals on the art of ski-ing found in transport wagons captured from the Russians. One of these books is shown above. Thousands of copies of this manual had never been unpacked, so that the unfortunate Russian troops had been unable to profit by them.



The Finnish advance from Kemijärvi freed territory which had been held by the Russians almost since the beginning of the war. The Russians had evidently intended at first to maintain their advance. The whole thirty-mile stretch of territory from which they retreated was honeycombed with dug-outs and shelters, and many trees had been felled to provide material for shelters and horse-boxes. The fact that the bark had been gnawed from trees by the Russian horses was taken to indicate a shortage of fodder, possibly a contributory cause of the swift retreat.

The Russians finally came to a halt on January 24 and dug themselves in, still on Finnish territory. The effort to outflank and dislodge these troops was made all the harder owing to the good roads and new railway constructed by the Russians from Kandalaksha, on the Murmansk–Leningrad railway, to the Finnish frontier. Nor is there any doubt that the Red troops on the Salla front were picked men, skilled in forest fighting and led by a cautious general.

Indeed, taking Russian tactics as a

whole, it seemed that the lessons of their earlier disasters were making an impression. A tendency to drop the use of massed formations was noticeable from the Arctic Ocean down to the Karelian Isthmus. In many places the Russians reinforced their raw levies with shock troops, drawn from the Ogpu brigades. Thus stiffened, the Russians, especially on the Karelian Isthmus, showed greater inclination to support their tanks.

Russian tanks did not, however, live up to the expectations engendered by Soviet propaganda abroad. The models used were chiefly out of date, the Russians manufacturing Christie, Vickers, Renault and Ford models under licence. Especially disappointing were the giant 33-ton tanks, several of which were captured by the Finns. This tank carried a three-inch gun and two 1½-inch guns in addition to machine-guns.





SWEDISH ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE FINNS

Within the bounds of her neutrality Sweden rendered considerable aid to Finland. Dog-teams, such as serve with the Swedish Army, were lent to the Finns for transport of supplies, and the upper photograph shows a sledge-driver harnessing one of his dogs in Northern Finland. Above, Swedish volunteers serving in Finland are seen manning an anti-aircraft gun.

Photos, Associated Press; Planet News

Russian casualties on the battlefronts after two months of warfare were estimated at 150,000 against Finnish casualties of 10,000, of whom 2,500 were killed and 2,000 severely wounded.

Finnish patrol activities behind the Russian lines had their Red Army counterpart in the dropping of parachutists at various points. These parachutists landed by night in remote parts of Finland, and at one time caused the Finnish High Command serious concern. In no case, however, did it seem that such patrols could radically affect the course of hostilities, and the Finnish High Command, by the institution of a control system which noted the passage of aircraft, and the placing of armed guards at vital railway bridges and junctions and key municipal plants, had the situation well in hand.

The arrival of Swedish and Italian volunteers in Finland during February gave immense encouragement to the Finns, although their numbers would seem to have been less than optimistic forecasts. Swedish volunteers were mentioned as having been in action in the middle of February. Three Swedish volunteer airmen were killed a few days later, one being the son of Torsten Jung, the match magnate. Swedish pilots were certainly of great value to the Finns, and they brought down six Russian 'planes within a few days of going into action.

One Swedish pilot returned to safety after his 'plane had collided over the Russian lines. He landed in the damaged 'plane in a forest, and trekked for three days along a path on skis until he reached the Finnish lines, his only "compass" being the stump of a Finnish cigarette which he found on the trail.

Italian pilots also earned high praise from the Finns, and twenty of them took part in the air raid on Kronstadt, the Russian naval base, mentioned in a later chapter of this narrative.

Soviet Bombing Raids

The war in the air followed the pattern which Hitler's Polish campaign had made familiar, except that the number of civilian casualties was relatively small (an estimate in the light of later knowledge put the total number killed at 700; *see* Chapter 143). Like the Germans, Russian pilots had acquired some experience in the Spanish civil war, but the aerial weapon was still largely an untried one and results were apt to be fortuitous. Under threat from opposing aircraft or from ground defences a pilot might aim badly or might in the last extreme just dump his bombs. Inevitably the civil population came off badly and buildings that ought to have been immune were damaged or destroyed at times. A favourite trick of the Russians was the "silent approach," whereby, with engines cut out, they glided to release their deadly missiles.

Throughout January hardly a day passed without mass attacks from the air. Aabo, the Finnish west coast port, and the towns of Ekenaes and Hangö in South Finland were perhaps the worst sufferers. Aabo was bombed by thirty Russian 'planes on January 2. One wing of the historic castle was destroyed, many houses burned, and a steamer sunk in the harbour. But the human casualties were only three killed and several wounded, among the latter being a Nazi member of the German Legation in Helsinki who was visiting the town. Raids continued almost daily until Aabo's worst experience on January 16, when a direct hit on an air-raid shelter killed fifty people.

Describing Aabo, Ekenaes and Hangö, a correspondent wrote: "These three towns, once flourishing centres of Finnish culture, are now filled with blackened and twisted ruins from which a grey pall of smoke rose into the leaden sky. More than 500 Russian 'planes have taken part in the raids, first dropping incendiary bombs, then high-explosive bombs."

This correspondent recalled the bitter words of a citizen of Aabo: "We are sick to death of sympathy—we have had enough and to spare. What we need is fighting 'planes." Another citizen remarked sombrely: "Why worry? If this goes on we shall all be dead in another fortnight."

By January 22, 400 houses had been destroyed in Aabo and an equal number at Hangö. The scenes were appalling and the misery of the inhabitants, rendered homeless in one of the bitterest Arctic winters within living memory, was intense.

Finnish Leaflet Dropped over Russian Lines

Front

THE Red chiefs and the Political Commissars are throwing you into the arms of an icy death.

We give you this advice—this is how you can save yourself. Destroy the Red chiefs and the Political Commissars and let yourself be taken prisoner. That is what thousands of your friends have done, and have thus escaped death.

Back

THE Finns pay generously for the arms you bring them.

For a revolver	100	*roubles*
,, ,, *rifle*	150	,,
,, ,, *automatic rifle*	400	,,
,, ,, *machine-gun*	1,500	,,
,, ,, *tank*	10,000	,,

For *an aeroplane* in good condition we pay 10,000 *dollars*, and, moreover, we will pay the passage of the pilot who brings it to us to any country he wishes.

Down with war! Surrender and cut short this war. Come in our camp and we will treat you as friends.



GOOD FINNISH PROPAGANDA

This is a reproduction of one of the leaflets dropped by the Finns over the Russian lines. The translation is given in the column above.

A particularly distressing incident of the air war was the bombing of a Finnish field hospital, which received a direct hit from a high-explosive bomb. Of 30 patients in the hospital, 23 were killed. Four women nurses and two male nurses also lost their lives.

"I arrived at the spot after a wild drive through the woods," wrote a correspondent. "The hospital was ablaze from top to bottom. The blackened and twisted corpses were being carried out of the building. The Russian flier returned again and again and fired machine-gun bullets at those who were trying to rescue the wounded from the burning building. I saw one of the men on the operating table with a terrible wound in the face. He had just been operated on when the bomb burst. Some of the patients saved themselves on crutches. Others, bleeding from new wounds, crawled out on hands and knees."

Another similar case was the bombing of a large steamer used for hospital purposes in Aabo harbour. It bore the customary Red Cross markings.

The most intense Russian air attack began on January 11, heralding five days of raids on places as far apart as Viipuri in the east and Helsinki in the south-west. Between 350 and 400 Russian 'planes took part in these raids. Viipuri alone was bombed by 22 'planes. In one week 2,000 bombs on 42 localities far from the battle-fronts were dropped. Most of the bombs aimed at Helsinki fell into the sea.

Few Casualties

Yet, in spite of these attacks, the loss of life among Finnish civilians was surprisingly small. In one week's intensive bombing only 18 civilians were killed and 93 wounded. By the middle of January it was estimated that the Russians had dropped 4,000 bombs on the civilian population and killed 250 people.

Nor did the Russian bombers have it all their own way. The arrival of foreign 'planes enabled the Finns to strengthen their defences. A great many Russian bombers were brought down; some figures put the number, after six weeks of hostilities, at 170. Early in January the Finns were stated to be using fast new bombers, attacking the port of Linamahari, near Petsamo, which was captured by the Russians in the early stages of the war.

On January 4 the Finn 'planes again took the offensive, and dropped 3,000,000 pamphlets on Leningrad. These pamphlets gave the news of



ROOF-TOP VIGIL IN HELSINKI

Despite the relentless persistence of the Russian air campaign against Finnish objectives, civilian casualties were relatively small. Highly efficient A.R.P. under the direction of the Inspector-General of the Ministry of Defence, Gen. Sihvo (left), and well-organized evacuation were the main reasons. Women played a vital part in this work, and above a V.S.S. (Air Raid Warden) is 'aeroplane-spotting' from a tall building in Helsinki.

Photos, Planet News



Finnish victories and promised good treatment to prisoners. The raid presumably had some propaganda effect, but could do little to help the Finns. It was clear that when the full strength of the Soviet Forces was brought into play Finland must be overwhelmed, short of very considerable assistance from abroad.

Finnish pilots showed themselves excellent fighters, one pilot shooting down six Russian bombers soon after they had been sighted from the ground. Of 24 Soviet warplanes which bombed Finnish towns on January 25, only three returned. But the Russians seemed to have inexhaustible supplies of bombers and pilots. Finnish fire-fighters became so weary after weeks of bombing attacks that they were physically incapable of checking the raiders.

More and more fighting 'planes from abroad seemed to be the crying need of the Finns—otherwise, as one authority expressed it, with the shortening of the Arctic nights and approach of spring, the Finns fighting in the front lines might have nothing to defend. Statements by authoritative British spokesmen implied that substantial British help was under way for Finland. In the middle of February, when the question of volunteers for Finland was raised in the British House of Commons, it was stated that a general licence had been granted to British subjects to enlist in the Finnish forces.

Chapter 51

THE NEW NAZI RELIGION: A FANTASTIC APOTHEOSIS OF PAGANISM

Initiation of the Fuehrer into 'Nordic' Traditions—Rosenberg's Gospel of Nazi Salvation, in which Christian Doctrine was Replaced by Nordic Myths —Streicher, Protagonist of 'Soul-Cleansing'—Persecution of Niemoller and other Christian Stalwarts—A Dread Portent

ALTHOUGH the persecution of the Christian Churches in Germany has aroused widespread condemnation in Britain and other countries, it scarcely appears to be realized in some quarters that this oppressive action was part of a definite movement which had for its object the restoration of the ancient pagan faith of Germany to the status and functions of a national religion, so reconstituted as to fit in with modern Nazi views. This policy, though at first expressed only tentatively and with extraordinary caution and subtlety of purpose, had, during the past few years, been pursued with increasing zeal and characteristic ruthlessness by those leaders who had more particularly identified themselves with the less material side of Nazi doctrine.

The sources from which this fantastic endeavour has had its rise are by no means obscure. Its most prominent apostle was Herr Alfred Rosenberg, a journalist and propagandist of Baltic-Russian extraction, who was obsessed by the prevailing doctrine of "Nordic" racial superiority. In numerous books and pamphlets he expressed the intention of the Nazi caucus to restore the ancient Teutonic traditions of life and belief in all their harsh and primitive ruggedness, as being essential to the welfare of the German race, whom he conceived as enfeebled and discouraged by Christian thought and practice.

Apostle of Paganism

When the Nazi political creed was as yet in its first stages of incubation, Rosenberg, an émigré from Bolshevist Russia, made his way to Munich, where he formed a close friendship with Herr Hitler. It was indeed by this Baltic Germanophile that the Fuehrer was more expressly initiated into the advanced principles of "Nordic" tradition. That Hitler was ripe for their reception was due chiefly to his profound personal admiration for the writings of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Paul de Legarde, and the works of Richard Wagner, which in the form of music-dramas cast a glamorous radiance over the crude hero-tales and legends of Teutonic antiquity. The intimacy grew apace, and when at last Nazism became a force to be reckoned with, Hitler appointed Rosenberg Director of the Foreign Press, Director of Philosophical Outlook for the Reich, and editor-in-chief of that chain of official newspapers, the most prominent among which is the "Völkische Beobachter."

With the power and the prestige of a triumphant party behind him, Rosenberg almost at once began the dissemination of his gospel of Nazi salvation. This was first published in a bulky and grandiloquent volume, "The Mythus of the Twentieth Century," which, because of the anti-Christian ideals it upheld, earned for its author in German religious circles the unenviable title of "the German anti-Christ." In the section of this amazing work which deals more particularly with religion, Herr Rosenberg revealed a grudging admiration for what he called the more "authentic" qualities of the Christian faith—that is, those aspects of it which have no connexion with purely "Semitic" ideals. The Founder of Christianity, he believed, was of Aryan, not Jewish, descent, and inculcated a "masculine" code of ethics and behaviour agreeable to German and Nordic ways of thought. On the other hand, the "feminine" or traditional element in Christianity he conceived as a later interpolation of Jewish origin, nauseous to and destructive of Nordic virility. Particularly were its doctrines of humility, gentleness and universal love to be abhorred by all good Germans as slavish and effete.



JEW-BAITER-IN-CHIEF

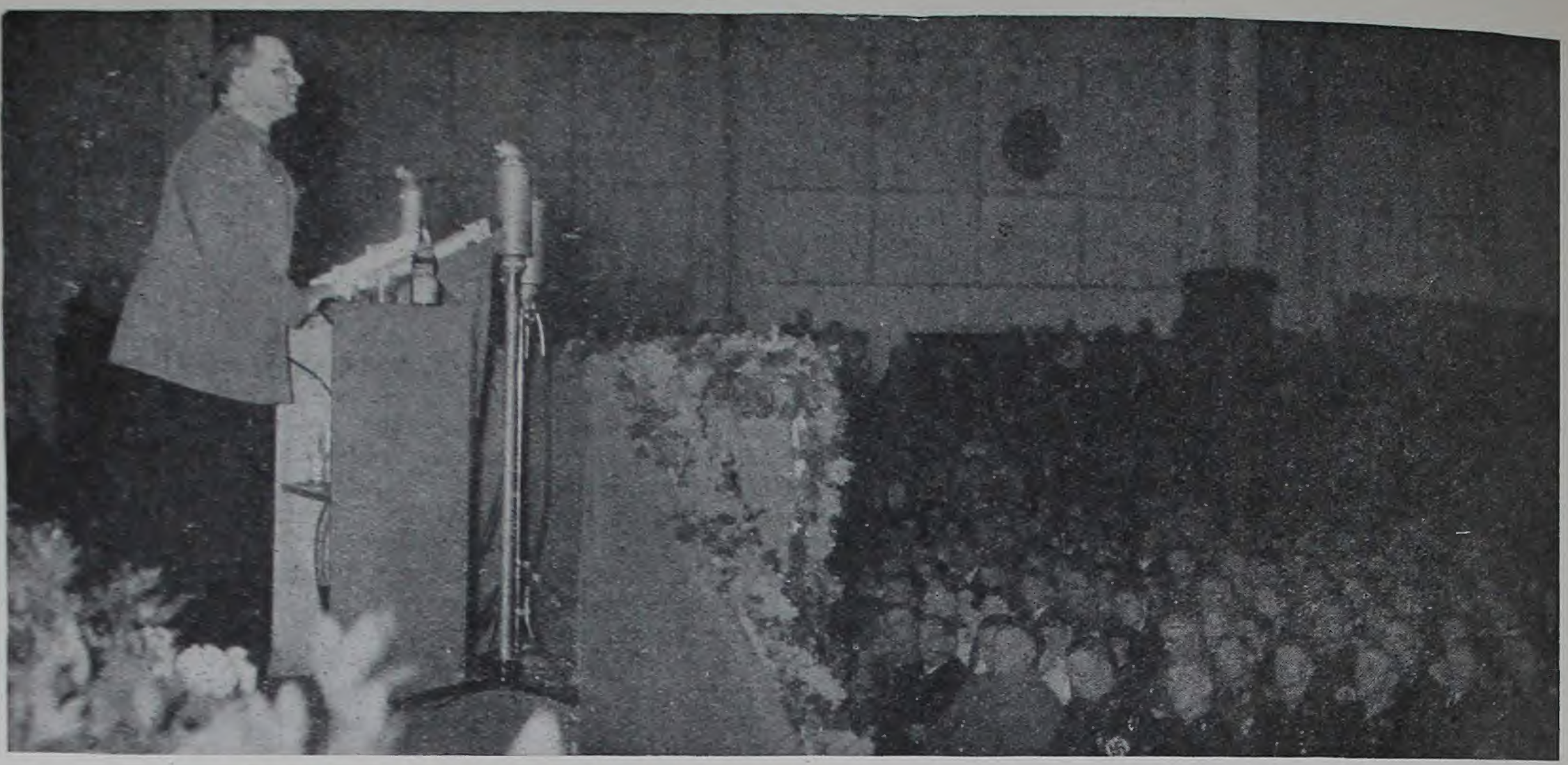
When Hitler made the 'Jewish problem' a burning issue under the Nazi regime, he appointed Julius Streicher (above) to conduct, in the pages of the notorious 'Stuermer,' a campaign against the Jews marked by invective of a particularly revolting character.

Photo, Keystone

Rosenberg's doctrines were, indeed, a complete transvaluation and denial of those moral and spiritual truths cherished and accepted by Christians of all denominations. Civilization he regarded as entirely a Germanic institution, and in the culture and traditions of other races could discern nothing but the rottenness of a degenerate Semitic or Latin effeminacy. To the Germanic race alone all progress was to be referred, but such culture as the rest of the world deemed it had acquired was spurious, a base and sordid departure from Nordic enlightenment. In particular he lamented the conversion of the early Germans to Christianity as a disaster of the first magnitude. Still, in this, his earliest essay towards the salvation of a naughty world, he had no intention of founding a new German religion.

Christianity Contradicted

But when Nazism became the ruling power in Germany, Rosenberg proclaimed the establishment of a Nazi National Church—invisible, perhaps, so far as its material fabric was concerned, but none the less in actual existence, "spiritually" speaking. In announcing this new departure he gave concrete expression to his more developed ideals, and that these had the authority of the Government behind them cannot be doubted in view of what followed. In the first place he held that it was not possible to distinguish between the idea of God and the racial soul of the German people. After thus deifying the German race, he laid it down that such Christian doctrines as the idea of redemption were noxious to "our noble German folk," who were in no need of such acts of Divine clemency. The Old Testament he



RUSSO-BALTIC APOSTLE OF TEUTONISM

Herr Alfred Rosenberg, seen above addressing a Nazi gathering at Munich, is the chief exponent of the doctrine of 'Nordic' racial supremacy. This apostle of Teutonism was born in Russia and served in the Russian Army during the First Great War. His 'Mythus of the 20th Century' is a standard work of Nazi ideology.

Photo, International Graphic Press

denounced as Jewish in its origin and insisted that it be eliminated along with all historic and institutional Christian dogmas, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic. Especially must the anti-Nazi ideals inculcated in the Sermon on the Mount be suppressed, along with the "degrading" symbolism of the Cross.

But this was by no means all. Christian doctrine, he maintained, having been vitiated by Semitic notions, was no longer to be trusted and must be replaced by the matter and spirit of the ancient Nordic myths and sagas, which alone were capable of inspiring the German race with those ideals of manly courage and traditions of stark and heroic valour essential to a conquering folk—virtues which had been undermined and almost obliterated by the demoralizing influence of Christianity. The Fatherland must be saved by a spiritual revolution of supreme intensity recaptured from the beliefs of the Teutonic past.

Back to Odin

But along with the Nordic myths and sagas, the legends of Thor and Odin, the Nibelung story, the Icelandic tales and the Eddas of Scandinavia in all their rather savage and sanguinary glory, the youth of Nazi Germany must accept as its "sacred books" the writings of the pessimistic Schopenhauer, of the mentally unbalanced Nietzsche, of Houston Chamberlain, Wagner, and Hitler. These must be its gospels, providing it with its natural and native sustenance. In order to give practical expression to this doctrine, Rosenberg pressed into his service as the chief hierophant of his new Germanic dispensation the notorious Julius Streicher, Jew-baiter and terrorist.

The first rites of the new religion were celebrated at the Nordic Festival of the Summer Solstice in 1938, held on the slopes of the Hesselberg, a mountain declared sacred to all Germans by Herr Hitler, where great fires were lighted and a species of ritual was gone through. Addressing a vast concourse of onlookers, Streicher declared that to cast one's sins into the holy fire before which they stood was to cleanse the soul. The German people, he said, were their own priests and had no need of the ministry of "black-coated men." Germans would ascend the holy hill whenever they felt the need for worship. Let them be "beautiful, godlike and natural."

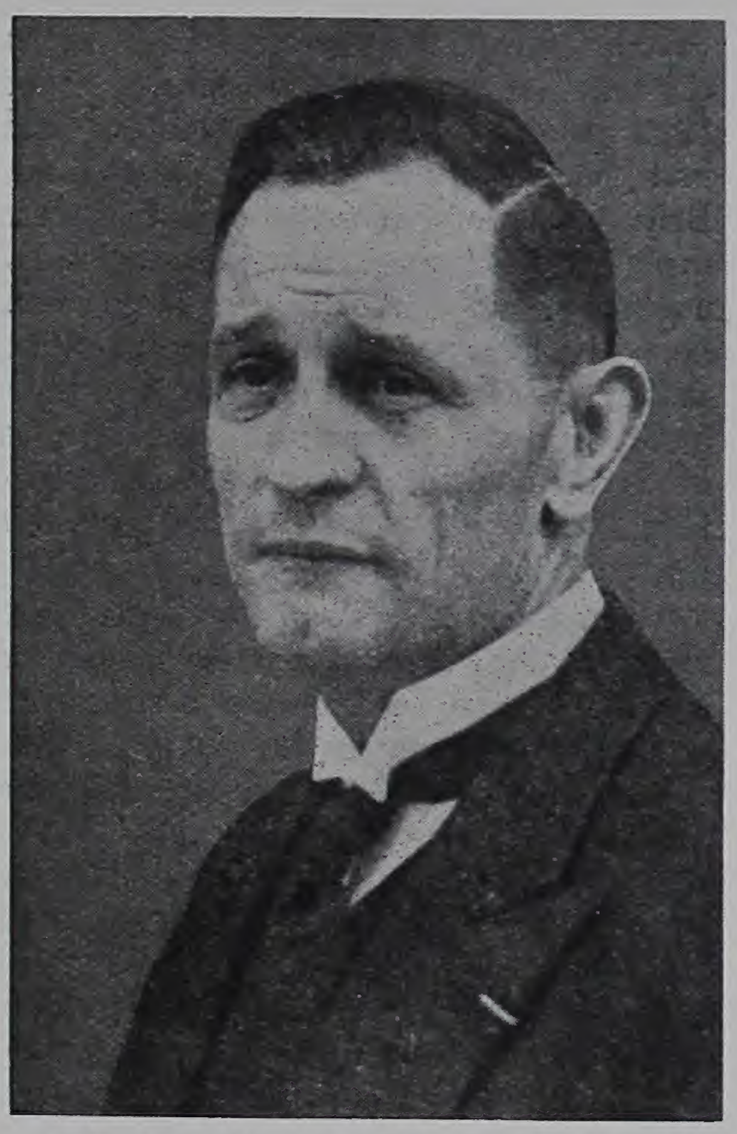
This Germanic creed, still in the melting-pot so far as its more precise tenets were concerned, had yet made its appeal to thousands among the ignorant or romantically inclined, bemused or obfuscated by the glamorous and successfully victorious record of Nazi achievement. But to the more stable elements in Germany it appeared as a portent dread and threatening. It was perhaps its approach to what might be called the "deification" of Herr Hitler which appalled and discouraged the more thoughtful and sober among the educated classes of Germany. This apotheosis of the Fuehrer was publicly announced by no less a personage than Dr. Robert Ley, one of the chief Ministers of State, who, in a general communication to the Hitler Youth, gave it utterance in words that can scarcely be described as equivocal. "We believe in Adolf Hitler alone in this world. . . . We believe that the Lord God has sent us Adolf Hitler so that Germany should be established for all eternity." If these words do not reveal a belief in the Messianic character and mission of the Fuehrer it would be difficult to suggest what they do disclose.

'German Christians'

The reaction of this authoritatively inspired movement upon the Christian Churches in Germany was naturally of the most disastrous kind, and it was opposed by them with all the vigour at their command in the peculiarly helpless circumstances in which for the time they found themselves. The presence of a considerable number of Nazi supporters in the Lutheran Church naturally had the effect of weakening the protest of that body. These banded themselves into what was known as "the German Christians," who gave unqualified support to Herr Hitler. But they were not a numerous party, although Government intervention had given them almost complete control of the whole organization.

In 1934 the Great Synod of the Lutheran Church courageously declared that it was founded upon the orthodox Christian revelation and that this was in no sense affected by the events of the Nazi Revolution. The Government at once intervened and a long term of discussion in joint committee followed. The champion of Lutheran orthodoxy, Dr. Niemöller, stoutly challenged such suggested innovations as the Messianic claims of Herr Hitler, the anti-Semitic legislation of the Government and its support of the new pagan doctrines. But the Gestapo put an end to the discussions; Dr. Niemöller was sent to a concentration camp on a charge of "contumacious behaviour," and the remaining pastors of his way of thinking were subjected to a life of continual persecution by the secret police. Those who still went about their duties were so constantly interfered with and subjected to so many insults and annoyances by the Department of State for Church Affairs, which completely dominated Church finance and the payment of stipends, that at length, worn down by the unequal struggle, those of the bishops and leaders of the denomination not already in prison or under surveillance by the Gestapo accepted the exclusive government of

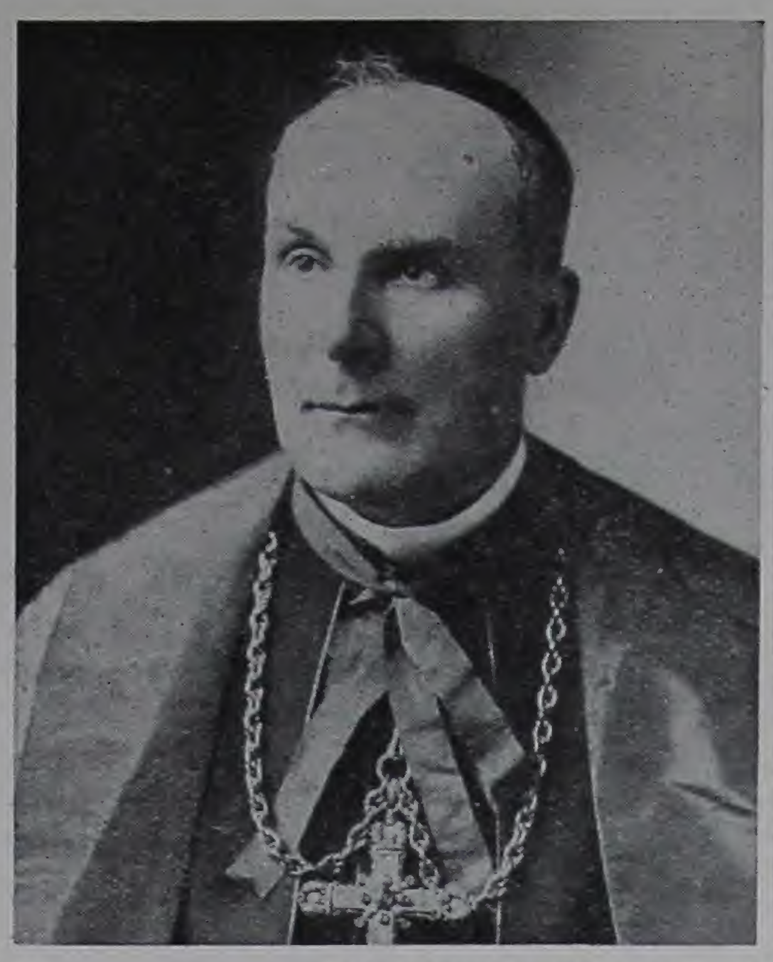
Niemöller Arrested



HE SUFFERED FOR HIS FAITH

Martin Niemöller, once a U-boat commander and later leader of the German Protestant Confessional Church, was imprisoned for his determined efforts to defend the Lutheran faith, after a secret "trial" in March, 1938.

Photo, Wide World





PERSECUTED LEADERS OF THE CHURCH

Above are Cardinal Faulhaber (left) and Cardinal Innitzer (right), two Austrian Catholic prelates who were persecuted by the Nazis after the enforced Anschluss. These outrages were severely censured by Pope Pius XI in an encyclical in 1937.

Photos, Wide World

the Church by "the German Christians," who forbade them to speak in public and closed down their training colleges. Later an Emergency Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Werner, a prominent Nazi, was convened for the control of what may be described as the wreck of a great national faith—that faith which, with such transcendent courage and sacrifice, was first witnessed to by one of the greatest of Germans, Martin Luther.

The Roman Catholic Church in Germany fared but little better. No sooner had Herr Hitler come to power than he signed a concordat with the Vatican, the terms of which were surprisingly generous. But, like most of his pacts, it seemed to have been made only to be broken, for some months later the same kind of vexatious newspaper campaign which was usually directed against Poles, Czechs and Jews was brought to bear upon the affairs of the Church of Rome. False and grievous charges of the prevalence of immorality in religious houses were trumped up and reported in the Press with such venomous and slanderous insistence as to cause the deepest pain to Catholics, casting obloquy upon the entire Roman community in Germany. The education of Catholic children was transferred from Church to State by means of overt threats and menaces to parents, while in Austria not only were Catholic priests and prelates, Cardinals Innitzer and Faulhaber among them, openly persecuted and threatened with violence, but later a levy was made upon Austrian Catholic Church fnnds, plate and treasures of art and other objects being demanded by the Government for the prosecution of the war.

The outrages upon the body and spirit of the Roman faith in the German lands and the blasphemous claims of the Hitler cult were the subject of a severe censure by the Pope (Pius XI), who, in his encyclical for 1937, denounced the "organized bondage in religious matters" which characterized the Nazi regime, its disloyalty to the spirit of the Founder of the Christian faith, and its substitution of "ancient pre-Christian German concepts" for the worship of the One God. By the beginning of 1939 the Nazi Government had secretly decreed the downfall of the Roman Church in Germany, a blow which was averted only by the personal efforts of Pope Pius XII (formerly Cardinal Pacelli), who dispatched an emergency summons to the German bishops to assemble with all haste at Rome, where the strongest measures were taken to urge the Italian and other Governments to intervene.

Roman Church Attacked

That the Nazi Party should seek to re-establish the traditions and worship of a faith of the lower cultus, whose deities and heroes were symbolic of the most primitive cunning and brutal violence, was sufficiently expressive of the spirit of grotesque and adolescent fantasy which undoubtedly inspired its leadership, and which indeed provided the most striking proof of that capacity for self-deception which was the most salient feature of Nazi mentality as displayed at that time.

Chapter 52

AGRICULTURE IN THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE WAR: RAISING MAXIMUM FOOD CROPS

Formation of War Agricultural Executive Committee—Putting Grassland under the Plough—Changes Brought about by War—Maintaining the Labour Supply—The Women's Land Army—Specialized Farms—Rationing of Animal Foodstuffs—Problem of Rabbits and Pests

THERE were times in the Great War of 1914–18 when the home front was badly shaken—how badly we know now from the official Blue Books and the spate of reminiscences from the pens of those directly responsible for the organization of the vast struggle. To prevent, if possible, a repetition of such experiences, the Government took certain steps as soon as the war clouds began to gather. Their task was to see that the country was so organized that the maximum amount of food could be produced. Ever before their eyes was the memory of those dark days of April, 1917, when shipping losses per month reached the appalling peak figure of 850,000 tons. Britain's available food supplies had then sunk to a dangerous margin. This was not to be allowed to happen again.

The first step taken, more than a year before the outbreak of hostilities, was for the Ministry of Agriculture to nominate privately a man with agricultural experience in each county. The duty of these men was to get together quietly a skeleton organization which could be developed into a first-class, active machine as soon as the emergency arose. In this very important task of selection all political partisanship was thrown aside. To get the best and most experienced man was all that mattered. Lord Addison, for example, though he had been Minister of Agriculture in the Labour Government of 1929–31, was asked by his Conservative successor in office to take over this duty of selection in the county of Buckinghamshire. All this important work was done voluntarily. At the outbreak of war the skeleton organization took on flesh and became alive. Smoothly, efficiently and without any fuss the machine already prepared began to operate.

War Organization

Deep rooted in the heart of the British people is a dislike of bureaucratic control, and of all classes the British farmer yields to none in his hatred of "the minions of Whitehall." To avoid arousing this prejudice and so hampering the work upon which they were engaged, care was taken to select an administrative personnel with whom the farmers were familiar. The agricultural officials so enlisted were local farmers and neighbours.

The organization was very simple. The nominee of the Ministry of Agriculture formed a War Agricultural Executive Committee, consisting mostly of experienced farmers. This committee was broken up into a number of sub-committees to deal with such obvious problems as the amount of grassland to be put under the plough, and the supply of labour and machinery. As all such committees run the risk of becoming remote from realities, an effective system of keeping in touch with the farmers was further devised. The county was divided up into areas corresponding to the various rural district councils. Over these areas presided a district committee, selected by the executive committee. The district committees were composed of farmers doing their work voluntarily. The last link in the chain of communication consisted of the parish correspondents—also for the most part farmers.



AN APPEAL SOON ANSWERED

To release shipping normally occupied in carrying imported food produce, Britain set to work to 'grow more food.' Allotments were formed in parks and open spaces all over the country, and the Spring of 1940 saw an army of civilians busily 'digging for victory.'

The task with which the various county committees were entrusted was in the first place to put 1,500,000 acres of grassland under the plough. That was the amount of land which, according to the Ministry experts, had gone out of production. To bring it back into production a quota was given to each county, the sum of those quotas amounting in all to 1,500,000 acres.

Ploughing Subsidy

The working of the plan was simplicity itself. First the farmer had to be encouraged of his own free will to put his grassland under the plough. For this purpose, in the months before the war, the Ministry of Agriculture announced a subsidy of £2 for each acre of old grassland broken up. This was, in effect, an attempt to sweeten the pill that had to be swallowed. Since 1919 practically half the arable land had been turned into grazing land. British farmers in some counties were rapidly becoming cow-keepers and nothing else. Moreover, they were keeping their cows on imported feeding stuffs, which might not be available in time of war. They had, therefore, to be given a mild incentive to do something which appeared opposed to their business interests.

With the outbreak of hostilities each county district committee began a survey of the land in its area which could be put under the plough. The parish correspondents visited all the farmers in their parishes, with whom, of course, they were on neighbourly terms, and discussed how much land they could bring into cultivation. They then forwarded the results of their investigations to the district committee, who, having collected all the required data for their area, reported to their War Agricultural Executive.

In the first months of the war everything went smoothly, and the War Agricultural Executive Committee had no occasion to use their compulsory powers, which were kept in reserve for



MISSILES OF DEATH AMID THE SNOWS

The Russians were harassed with numerous counter-attacks by the Finnish troops, who made up for their numerical inferiority by greater mobility and enterprise; and the photograph above shows Finnish soldiers hurling hand grenades in an attack on Russian outposts in the Salla sector.

Photo, Planet News



AFTER THE GREAT RUSSIAN ROUT—

When the great battle of Suomussalmi, during the course of which the Finns smashed the Russian 44th Division, was over, enormous numbers of prisoners and a colossal amount of war material remained in the possession of the Finns. The spoils included about a hundred field guns, and nearly three hundred motor-cars and armoured cars, as well as numbers of field kitchens, and



—GRIM DEBRIS OF THE BATTLEFIELD

anet News

great quantities of small arms and ammunition. The photograph above, though showing but a tiny part of the battlefield, bears witness to the ferocity of the struggle which took place there. Wrecked and abandoned Soviet vehicles are scattered about in profusion, surrounded by the corpses of their defenders, but the scene of carnage is mercifully veiled by a mantle of snow



SOME OF THE RUSSIAN DEAD AT PETSAMO

The Russian casualties after the Soviet Army's repeated attempts to break through the Finnish defences were enormous, and in the intense cold which prevailed during the winter months most of the wounded soon succumbed. Here are Russian dead in the Petsamo region awaiting burial ; the man on the left is frozen stiff in the attitude in which he met his end.

Photo, Planet News

recalcitrant farmers, if and when necessary. In many counties half the work to be done was done voluntarily, and the local farmers ploughed up a portion of their grassland. By December all the work so embarked upon voluntarily had been completed. Then the executive committee issued a " Ploughing-Up Order." This procedure—the Ploughing-Up Order was only issued after the grassland had been broken up—had a legal object. It overrode the terms of a farmer's tenancy agreement, exempting him from the necessity stated in his agreement of obtaining the landowner's consent to the ploughing-up of grassland. Armed with this order, he was under no necessity of paying any compensation to the landlord, or of buying seed to put back to grass the land which had been broken up.

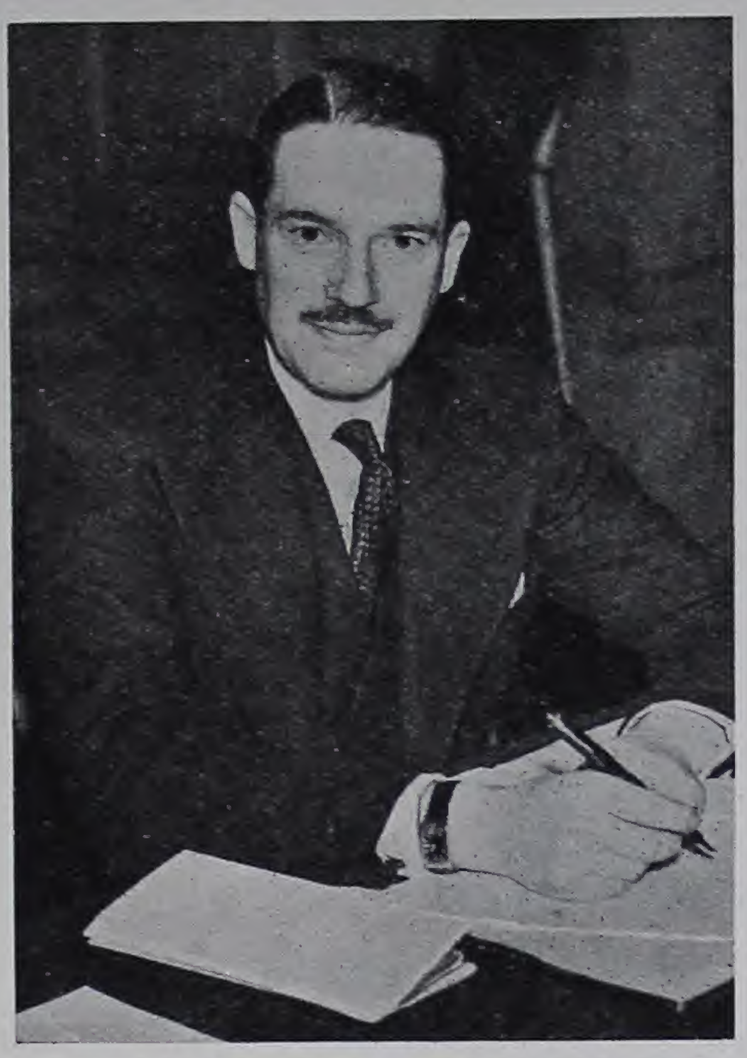
Profiting by the experience of the war of 1914–18 the county executive committees avoided the mistakes that were then made. Between 1914 and 1918 farmers were asked to concentrate on the production of wheat. In the present war the main object of the agricultural effort had been to produce animal feeding stuffs. The Government have stressed this point for the obvious reason that the more food produced for stock, the more animals there will be for human consumption. In effect, the task attempted involved nothing short of a revolution—the giving of a new direction to the interests of farmers, diverting them from becoming merely cow-keepers, into which state they were rapidly sinking. For this purpose the crops approved by the county executive committees were winter wheat, oats, barley —on light land rye—potatoes, peas, beans and roots. In order that the scheme may operate fairly a farmer who ploughs up poor land and allows it to lie fallow, so that it may regain its fertility, is not necessarily debarred from the subsidy of £2 an acre.

That this scheme was not a purely bureaucratic one, divorced from the real interests of the farmers, was proved by experience. The best brains in agriculture had long maintained that grass farming—what may be called the production of milk instead of crops—was not the best farming.

Arable Extended

According to such an authority as Sir George Stapleton, only a small part of the land should be permanent grass, and all other grassland should be ploughed every eight years.

The extent of the change brought about by the war varied, of course, in different counties. In Suffolk, for example, there was very little grassland to break up. In the Home Counties the situation was very different. In Buckinghamshire only one in every five fields was arable in 1938, and 30,000 acres had to be put under the plough. Indeed, a complete change had to be effected—from dairy farming to mixed farming. In such counties the executive committees were faced immediately with the problem of machinery. In one area there were fifty farms, with an average of 150 acres, given over so entirely to the production of milk that only one single-furrow horse plough could be found among them. To meet this deficiency the committee had to obtain ploughs, and then to harness to them some motive power.



MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

Major Sir Reginald Dorman - Smith, a former President of the Farmers' Union, was Minister for Agriculture when the war broke out.

Photo, Central Press

A simple system was adopted : The farmer having no suitable appliances was advised first to borrow from his neighbours. If these were not able to supply him, he could next seek the help of a ploughing contractor. In the last resource the executive committee placed at his disposal some of the thirty tractors supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture to each county. These tractors were under the control of a machinery officer and were distributed in groups of five under the care of a foreman responsible for their maintenance. The farmer was charged from £1 to 25s. per acre for the use of these tractors in breaking up grassland.

Another difficult problem that had to be tackled was the supply of labour. In those counties where mixed farming had been gradually dwindling away and more and more land had been left under grass, the skilled agricultural labourer was becoming as rare as the Great Auk. At harvest time and hay-making farmers relied upon the local Employment Exchanges to supply them with the practically unskilled labour they required. The new condition of things created by the war obviously made this method impracticable. To tend crops—to hoe and single roots—requires skilled men. Where were the farmers to find them ?

The county executive committees in all cases adopted the same method. A labour officer was appointed in each county to co-ordinate the supply of labour. As part of his duty it fell to him to keep in touch with all the Labour Exchanges and to anticipate the needs of farmers well beforehand. When the local exchanges could not supply the skilled men required, arrangements had to be made to fetch the labourers from other areas and to find accommodation for them near their work. But as it was impossible to obtain all the skilled labour required by this means, the executive committees resorted to a new source. This was the Women's Land Army, enlisted and controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Labour Supply

In response to the national appeal thousands of women flocked to enlist. They were drawn from all classes—domestic servants, the daughters of professional men, society girls. In the war of 1914–18 a similar organization did magnificent work, but there was then a great waste of human material, which this time the Government was determined to avoid. To begin with, would-be recruits were carefully selected and those obviously unlikely to be of any use were refused. The recruit was then placed on a farm for a month's training, during which time she received ten shillings a week, in addition to her board and lodging. The Women's Land Army meanwhile kept in touch with the farmer with whom the recruit had been placed, receiving regular reports of her progress. If those reports were not favourable, she was discharged at the end of the month. If they were favourable—that is to say, if she was likely to become an efficient landworker —she was found employment, receiving the standard agricultural pay.

Considerable organization was needed to supervise those thousands of young women who were helping to raise the nation's food. One of the most acute problems to be faced was that of housing. Obviously accommodation





WORK OF THE WOMEN'S LAND ARMY

Some aspects of the work of the Women's Land Army, the badge of which is seen alongside, are given in these photographs, which show, above, Land Army girls pointing stakes for fencing ; left, learning thatching in Suffolk ; below, packing sugar beet tops into a silo at the Northamptonshire Institute of Agriculture.

Photos, Fox



adapted to male agricultural workers—assuming such to be available—was not suitable for the members of the Women's Land Army. In some counties this difficulty was solved by taking over empty houses and running them on hostel lines. By this means W.L.A.s were assured of certain amenities, of which they would otherwise be deprived. The county committees relied mainly on the Women's Land Army for the skilled work that had to be done in the spring, when male labour might not be available.

Simplified Organization

It will explain the essential simplicity of this vast organization if the channel of communication between the farmer and the controlling authority—the County War Agricultural Executive Committee—be followed out. The farmer takes his difficulties to his parish correspondent, a man he has probably known all his life. The parish correspondent forwards this to the district committee, who, if circumstances permit, deal with it direct. If the question raised is complicated, involving a matter of county policy, the committee refer the problem to the cultivation sub-committee, who in the last resource appeal for a ruling to the executive committee. The farmer has no hesitation in making use of this channel, for he knows that everyone concerned is familiar with his difficulties, is capable of understanding them, and will treat them with sympathy and common sense. At the beginning of the war all the energies of the county committees were directed to the solution of the first and most important problem—that of producing food for animals, which in turn could become food for the people. Other questions had also to be tackled, and among the chief of these was the rationing of the foodstuffs produced. It was realized as a possibility, to meet which preparations should be made, that there might be an unequal division of foodstuffs required for animals. One farmer might have more than he required for his stock, and another too little. To ensure that no farmers should suffer—that all the stock raised should be fed properly, so that the maximum amount of food should be raised in the country for the benefit of the nation—a rationing scheme was drawn up.

Attention was also given to specialized farms such as pig and poultry farms. For the most part farms of this nature relied upon imported food, and circumstances might arise when this would be difficult to obtain. One of the duties of the executive committees was to advise farmers how they could employ locally grown substitutes, and to see that the supplies were forthcoming. In addition to all cereal crops the committees encouraged the production of roots and kale. In some counties dairy farmers who had broken up their grassland were advised to grow one-third mangels, one-third swedes, and one-third marrow-stemmed kale, or thousand-headed kale. Another problem with which the executive committees had to deal was that of rabbits and pests. This was met by organized scientific destruction.

In the early months of the war more than half the 1,500,000 acres of grassland required to be put back into production had been voluntarily broken up. A great deal of the remainder will be dealt with "by persuasion," and it is only with the residue that the executive committees may be called upon to use their compulsory powers. These cases will probably be limited to the Home Counties and to the districts immediately adjoining big industrial centres.

The speculative builder, who had bought land and was holding it against the time when he could run up houses at a profit, was likely to find his building sites under the plough. This might apply as well to land that had already been scheduled for building. Nothing was to be allowed to stand in the way of the nation being properly fed.

SPEED THE PLOUGH

One of the first steps taken by the Ministry of Agriculture on the outbreak of war was to see that as much land as possible was put under cultivation. Below, tractors are ploughing a Perthshire field which has been grassland for over twenty years.

Photo, Planet News



APPEALS TO THE CIVILIAN'S PATRIOTISM

So different were the early months of the War from their counterpart in 1914, that the "man in the street" might be forgiven for not fully realizing the grim struggle in which the Allies were engaged. Spokesmen of the Government therefore addressed themselves from time to time to the Home Front on the necessity for sacrifice and unselfishness. We give below excerpts from three such admonitions.

MR. W. S. MORRISON MINISTER OF FOOD, IN A BROADCAST, JANUARY 6, 1940:

We are asking our sailors and seamen and airmen to bring food supplies to us. I sometimes think of the great contrast between our lives in this war—the lives we are leading in the shelter of our homes, and the lives of our seafaring men. Work as we will, we cannot make a contribution equal to theirs. What we must be quite sure about is that we do not ask them, for all their readiness and fine courage, to run unnecessary risks for us.

Having decided to take less, there must be perfect fairness of distribution: no first-come-first-served or anything of that kind. We must divide what we have and share out equally—and that can only be done by rationing. . . . This spirit of rationing represents the spirit in which one and all of us will wish to take the strain and face the testing of war . . We will not ask our menfolk at sea to bring us more food than we need. Let them bring instead of that surplus more and more of all that will increase our protection and their strength. And, until we have won the victory, we at home will share out what our men bring us as they share the dangers of their service.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, IN A SPEECH AT THE MANSION HOUSE, JANUARY 9, 1940:

Parallel with this development of our military forces we have the great system of civil defence which has been built up by way of preparation against air raids. Day and night our fighting aircraft, our anti-aircraft guns, our observer corps are mobilized and stand ready to detect and meet the raiders. Then we have also the auxiliary firemen and police, air raid wardens, casualty services, and all that great army of volunteers, most of them part-time unpaid workers, who form an essential part of our system of civil defence. Finally, we have the speedy measures which we have taken to diminish risks—evacuation, the black-out, the restriction upon the hours of places of public entertainment, and all the complicated arrangements for casualties at first-aid posts and hospitals.

These are vast preparations and they have occasioned a good deal of hardship and inconvenience, loss of money and, I am sure, loss of life, too, in street accidents. Then, after all, four months have gone by and the air raids have not come. Some people think it really is very disappointing, and it is perhaps not surprising that others should ask whether, after all, all these preparations were necessary and whether we have not gone a great deal too far in the direction of safety.

I wish I could take that view, but all I am going to say now about it is this: Whilst we have already reviewed all our different precautions and modified and amended them where we thought that we could do so without disregarding the important factor of safety, I do not consider that the risk of air raids is over or even that it has diminished. And so long as that is so I am certain that we should make a capital mistake if we were to reverse the policy that we have hitherto followed. . . .

We must not think because this war has not taken the form hitherto that it did in 1914 that we can carry on our lives as if we were still at peace. We have got to do without a lot of things that we shall miss very much. Although we are not yet actually fighting on land, we are making preparations to enable us to do so with the greatest effect whenever the right moment comes.

For that purpose we are devoting more and more of our man-power to the production of armaments. That must mean that there is less and less of our man-power available to produce civilian goods. . . .

Even supposing we had ample supplies of labour we should still have to curtail our imports of goods which are not necessary for the prosecution of the war in order to leave available our resources of foreign exchange and of shipping to purchase and to bring home in ships imports of those things which we cannot do without.

It must be remembered that since our raw materials, like our foodstuffs, are only partly produced at home and have largely to be imported from overseas. when we are making munitions on the present scale we are adding enormously to the amount of imports which become necessary to us and therefore to the demands upon our shipping. . . .

Exports Must Pay for Imports

Imports have to be paid for, and they can only be paid for in one of three ways, either in gold, or by the sale of foreign securities, or by the export of goods and services. Therefore since our supplies of gold and foreign securities are limited—and, mind you, we must keep reserves of those things in case this may prove to be a long war—we are driven back upon exports, and we have therefore got, in order to cope with this situation, to increase our exports as much as we can and at the same time to diminish the imports of the things that we can do without. . . .

If you find that you cannot buy the woollen goods that you have been accustomed to, remember that wool is wanted for the clothing of the Army. If you are asked to lessen your consumption of bacon and sugar, remember that you are making available space in ships which can be used for iron ore or machine tools. If you are asked to put your savings into Savings Certificates instead of spending them, remember that you are giving help to the Chancellor in his Herculean task of finding the wherewithal for our unprecedented expenditure on munitions.

In these times of war I cannot guarantee—no one can guarantee—that the sacrifices of all are going to be equal, but if each one makes the sacrifice as the call comes to him, his own conscience will be clear and our combined efforts will see us through.

LORD HALIFAX, FOREIGN SECRETARY, IN A SPEECH AT LEEDS, JANUARY 20, 1940:

It is vital that we should realize that the home front is not less important, even if it is for the time being less dangerous, than any other. The land front against Germany in the West stretches from the Shetlands to Switzerland. Every yard of that front must be held with equal resolution and the holding of it is going to demand heavy sacrifices from us all, and service on the home front means sacrifice.

It means willing and cheerful compliance with wartime restrictions which, whether by the release of shipping, or by the saving of financial strain, or in any other way, can help the generality of our war effort. It means cutting out all but absolutely necessary expenditure. It means lending to the State every penny that we can. It means changes in industry to meet the great demands of war production, and it means for everybody hard and unremitting work.

The campaign for war savings is a great national effort to bring in a great volume of savings to reinforce our national finances, and it is of the highest importance to the State that that campaign should achieve success. A steady and continuous effort will be needed throughout the war. Let us give cheerfully, let us think always of sacrifice as something which gives strength and dignity to the cause in which it is made, and let us not forget that our cause will only mean victory if those who passionately believe in it are prepared to spend themselves in its behalf.

Chapter 53

THE HOME FRONT: A SURVEY OF EVENTS AND PROBLEMS AT THE TURN OF THE YEAR

Tenants' Problems—Rationing—Black-out Dangers—Modified Lighting in Streets and Trains—A.R.P. Costs—Educational Readjustments—Paying for the War—Review of Britain's Economic Position—Rigours of an Abnormal Winter
(previous events on the Home Front are dealt with in Chapters 7 and 25)

WELL into the New Year (1940) the war continued to make apparently very slow progress in the eyes of the public, and the state of rather bored waiting, varied by controversies over administration, was a continuation of the situation which had evolved at home by the end of October, 1939. The storm over certain additional provisions of the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act (described in Chapter 25) had ended in an agreement among all parties by the end of November; but it was seen to have repercussions in America, producing a quite false impression—possibly Isolationist sentiment was largely responsible for this—that Britain had been forced into "Totalitarian" methods of Government. Actually the freedom of that public criticism which resulted in some concessions by the Government should have corrected such a view, though the powers of Government Departments remained overwhelming.

An aspect of wartime government that was of more popular concern soon revealed itself in certain cases where, under the Courts Emergency Powers Act, magistrates protected tenants from eviction for non-payment of rates or rent. The simplest cases involved were those where the husband in a family had been called up for military service. Thus a deputy judge at a London County Court observed that if the court were satisfied that a tenant's inability to pay immediately had arisen from the war, the landlord was deprived of his right to distrain. This general principle was the one most commonly invoked, though the courts soon had to deal with more complicated issues. Among these latter were the pleas of hotel-keepers unable to meet liabilities because of loss of business owing to evacuation and the black-out. Many business firms had removed away from vulnerable centres when the war began, but by December, 1939, they were planning to return so as to avoid the inconveniences of these changes of locality.

Humane Laws

Food rationing remained largely an abstract question up to the end of December. After January 8, 1940, when the rationing of bacon (4 oz. a week), sugar (12 oz. a week) and butter (4 oz. a week) really got under way, there was no shortage; on the contrary, surplus stocks sometimes resulted, and in the middle of January certain kinds of bacon were permitted to be sold without surrender of coupons. At the end of the month the bacon ration was increased to 8 oz. Meat came under Government control on January 15. Local shortages, especially of beef, occurred towards the end of January, although rationing was delayed until March 11. Certain dislocations of the machinery of distribution in the trade had occurred while the Government was taking over supplies.

A sense of wartime dangers was stimulated in the public chiefly by the black-out regulations, which continued into the New Year as the dominant interest. Since the likelihood of serious air raids on civilian centres seemed to be remote, criticism of the lighting restrictions grew in volume and acerbity, while evacuees returned to the big centres in increasing numbers. Casualties to pedestrians on the roads reached high figures, a fact which was stressed as part of the argument to persuade the Ministry of Home Security to relax the lighting regulations, which were felt most severely in the dark autumn and winter days. Statistics showed that up to the end of November, 1939, there had been 2,975 deaths from road accidents in three months—over 1,000 more than those for the same period of 1938. And yet about half a million cars had been laid up by the middle of December, owing to the heavier taxes and the severe rationing of petrol to private users.

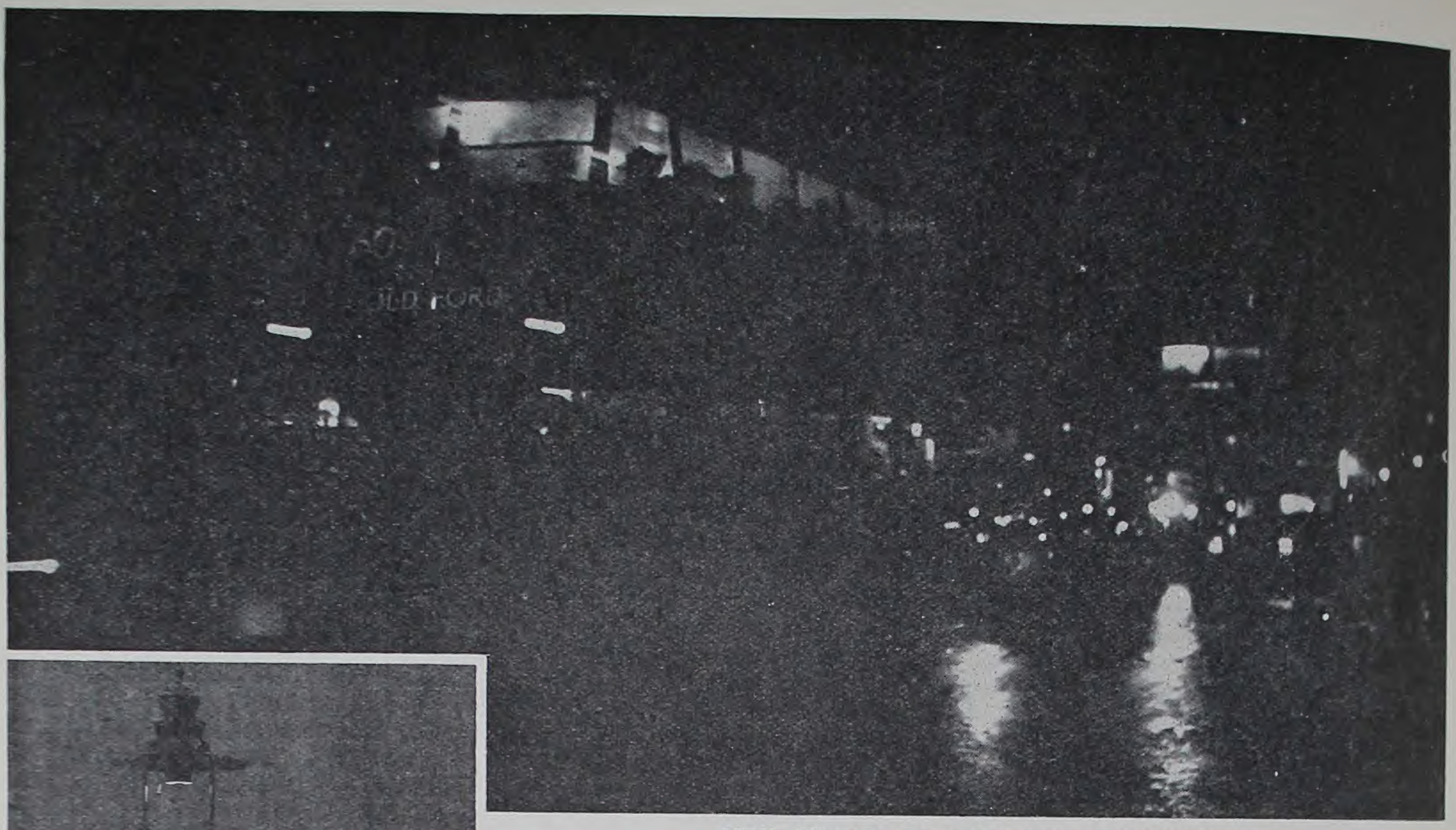
The dimmed and depressing lighting of railway carriages, which made it impossible to read after dark, was another "grouse" which the British

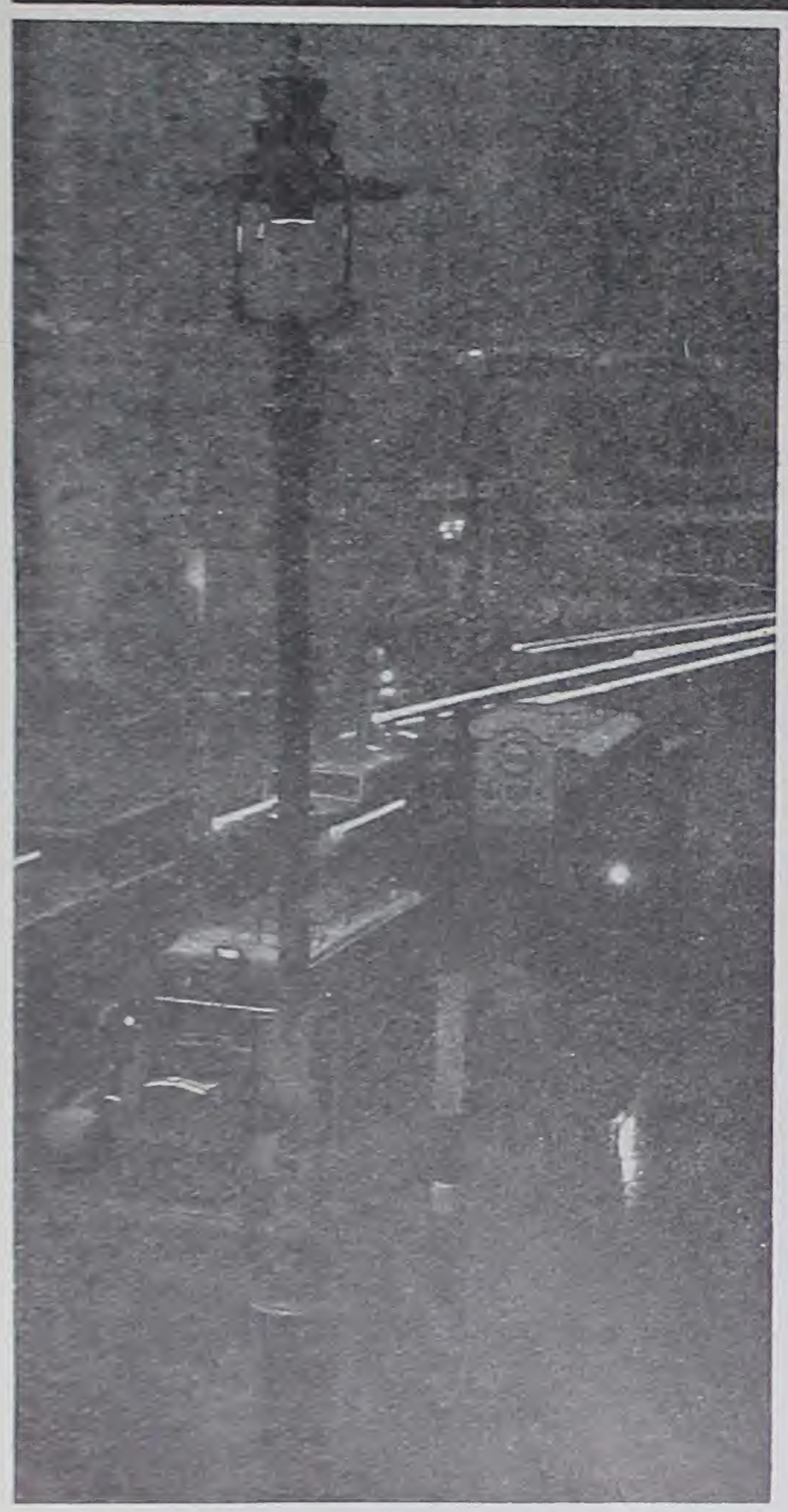


CHECKING FOOD RATION COUPONS

After food rationing had come into force on January 8, 1940, shop assistants found themselves confronted with the tedious job of counting thousands of tiny coupons. This necessarily took up an enormous amount of time, and representations were made to the Ministry of Food in the hope of finding some more satisfactory method, such as the issuing of cards on which the counterfoils could be cancelled by stamp.

Photo, Fox





NEW REALM OF CIMMERIAN DARKNESS

To those who only knew London before the war, it would seem scarcely credible that the scene of murky darkness pictured above should be Piccadilly Circus, the so-called ' Hub of the Empire,' which once turned night into day with its scintillating lights. The black-out which came into being with the war transformed the haunt of Eros and the flower-sellers into a cavern of Stygian gloom, which the new ' starlight ' lighting, seen left in Regent Street, did little to relieve.

Photos, Fox; Planet News

citizen still ventilated very freely. Continued criticism was eventually justified by the demonstration, on some suburban lines, that almost normal lighting could be restored by blacking-out the carriage windows and arranging to switch down the controlled lights should a raid warning be received. To the great relief of numberless citizens going to their daily work this improved lighting on trains was applied more widely—or at least its application was promised as the necessary equipment could be acquired. In their complaints about inadequate road-lighting the public received lively support in December from shopkeepers, who feared the loss of Christmas shopping unless a safe means of illuminating shop windows were allowed.

In answer to the clamour the Government firmly maintained the necessity of the A.R.P. regulations, but announced that further experiments were being conducted to ascertain the possibilities of modifying the black-out. On December 2 the Ministry of Home Security approved the use of a device for illuminating shop windows with directed light which would cast no reflection on the street. Lamps were placed inside a box-like container which could throw the light upwards or downwards and away from the window. Further test flights above London were made by R.A.F. 'planes to observe the effects of the black-out, though most people realized quite well that the flashes from trolley-buses and electrified railways could always betray London from some distance away in the air, while nothing could conceal the river Thames and its estuary.

From a different angle Viscount Cecil, in November, had emphasized the need for more thorough road safety measures by controlling motor vehicles more strictly. In December blame was being thrown also on the stupidly careless pedestrian. While the demand for more street lighting continued, the public was not deeply impressed by Sir John Anderson's assurance that there had been a substantial reduction of crime in the Metropolitan Police area since the introduction of the restrictions.

The Clerk of Westminster City Council wrote to Sir John Anderson expressing the opinion that it would be practicable, on the lines of a test carried out in Liverpool, to devise a modified form of street-lighting. Although the new motor-car headlight mask, which met the Minister's requirements, was coming into general use in December and helping to improve the illumination on the roads, the announcement that official tests were being conducted to find a suitable form of modified street-lighting was generally welcomed. At last the lamps, fitted with a special kind of shade to diffuse the light over the normal area, were tried out in Westminster, and called " starlight " lamps. They gave a dim

light (since the intensity was not allowed to be greater than ·00025 foot-candles—about one four-hundredth to one four-thousandth of that for normal lighting), but it was enough at least to make the ground visible to the benighted pedestrian, and to enable him to see or guess where the kerb was. Before Christmas, 1939, Glasgow became one of the pioneers on a big scale in the use of this new lighting.

An acute shortage in the supply of batteries for torches intensified the demand for the modified lighting. Although many batteries were coming from America and Belgium—home manufacturers being quite unable to meet the demand while also supplying the Services—it was well into the New Year before they became plentiful.

The comparatively trivial character of some of the chief matters of public concern at this time justly reflected the confidence of the civil population in home security. On December 14, 1939, Sir John Anderson announced in the House of Commons that the new type of low-intensity street lighting would be allowed in all areas of the country except certain regions on the East and South-East coasts. But the useful "starlight" lamps were adopted only very slowly by various local councils.

Not so prolonged as the black-out campaign but equally lively for a while, and marked by a good deal of irresponsible and incorrect newspaper controversy, was the burst of criticism directed at the cost of A.R.P. services. Some combing out of excess personnel had been instituted in the autumn, and here and there was reported to be going on still in December. But the Minister of Home Security did not encourage the criticism of A.R.P. costs, which was often unreasonable, especially when the paid workers were reproached with having nothing to do. On November 30 Sir John Anderson stated in the House of Commons that the average weekly expenditure on the whole-time volunteers enrolled in Air Raid Precautions and Emergency Fire Service in October was estimated at £775,000. A few days later he addressed a letter to local authorities, explaining the Government's decision that all part-time unpaid volunteers for A.R.P. should be compensated for loss of earnings due to their duties, caused by an air raid. The maximum compensation was 10/– a working day for men and 7/– for women. At the beginning of December there were over 1,000,000 A.R.P. workers on the books of the authorities as available in any emergency, and there were also 700,000 trained workers in industrial establishments. The total reduction of costs had been negligible. On December 14 Sir John Anderson stated that the paid whole-time volunteers totalled 291,000 in the A.R.P. organization and the A.F.S., of whom 286,000 received £2 a week or more. The total monthly cost of A.R.P. personnel was about £3,750,000, almost the whole of which was borne by the Exchequer.

The London County Council Emergency Committee in its capacity of Finance Committee submitted to the Council on December 18 a special estimate for the cost of civil defence from the beginning of the war up to March 31, 1940. This totalled £6,000,000, of which only £300,000 would fall on the rates. The big total for the Metropolis was divided up under the following significant heads :

Auxiliary Fire Service	£3,250,000
Auxiliary Ambulance Service	£1,000,000
Rescue, Shoring and Demolition	£1,250,000
Other items	£500,000

The grim possibilities thus plainly envisaged by the authorities hardly affected the general indifference of the public. This was reflected in the same Committee's report on evacuation. It stated that on November 28 there were 120,741 schoolchildren who had been kept in London, 71,878 who had returned after being evacuated, and







MEN WHO SERVE ON THE HOME FRONT

Britain's Home Defence forces consisted largely of men of mature age with previous military experience. In the upper photograph some of them are seen on duty by a railway tunnel. Above, a member of the Observer Corps is plotting the course of an unidentified aircraft. The report will be telephoned to the central control.

Photos, Sport & General ; Central Press

A.R.P. MARINES

The A.R.P. Marines came into existence to succour the injured aboard ships attacked by Nazi aircraft. Some of them are seen above demonstrating the method of hauling a wounded seaman, laced in a "sling," from the hold of a vessel in distress.

Photo, Associated Press



APT SLOGANS OF THE ECONOMIC FRONT

These inspiring slogans, placed on the plinth of Nelson's Column, incited people to lend their savings for national defence.
Photo, Topical

70,948 who were in London though not on any school rolls.

Raids by German aircraft on the East Coast occurred with increased frequency in the New Year, and possibly made more impression on the mind of the public than the official warnings not to relax in vigilance. The carrying of gas-masks, which had greatly fallen off by December, seemed once more fairly general, though far less common than it had been during the first month of the war. London people still seemed apathetic, and not one in four carried any mask. At the end of January some 80,000 out of about 240,000 London schoolchildren evacuated had returned to the Metropolis, with about 2,000 of their school teachers. Only 120 of the 900 elementary schools had yet been reopened, though plans were being made to reopen more as soon as possible, to meet the educational needs of this returned population. The 120 schools opened could accommodate only about 34,000 pupils by shifts, and home tutoring for another 100,000 children was being conducted by the busy teachers, who toured regional groups.

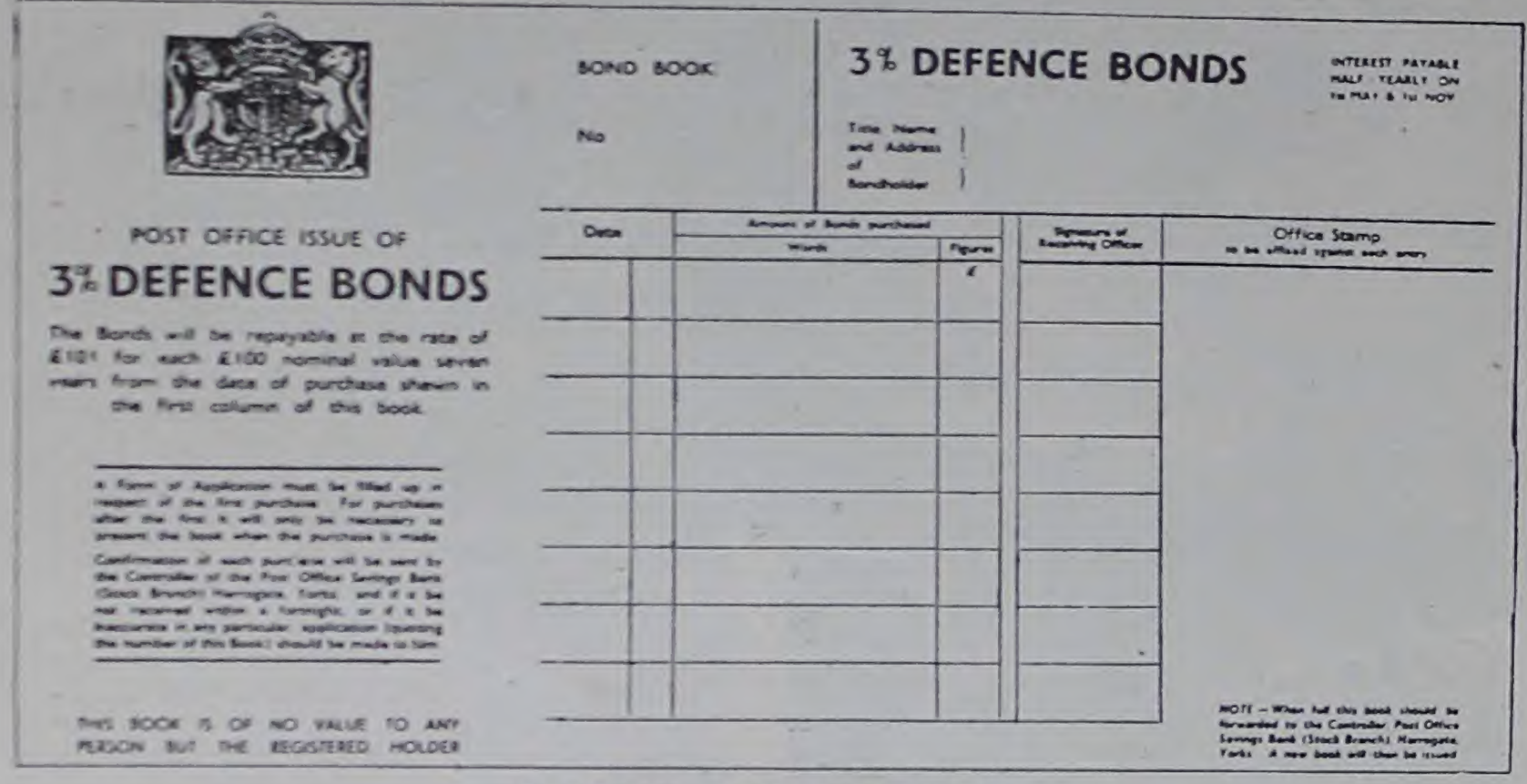
Readjustment of the educational position was hampered by the occupation of some schools as A.R.P. and A.F.S. posts, while others had not yet been supplied with the air-raid sheltering required by the official regulations.

Also connected with the general reorganization of resources for civil defence was the opening of schools and colleges at new centres in safe areas. This involved much hard work for teachers, and in some instances involved a rather serious hold-up of university studies for scholarships or degrees. Much of the temporary dislocation, however, was being straightened out by the beginning of 1940.

Education Dislocated

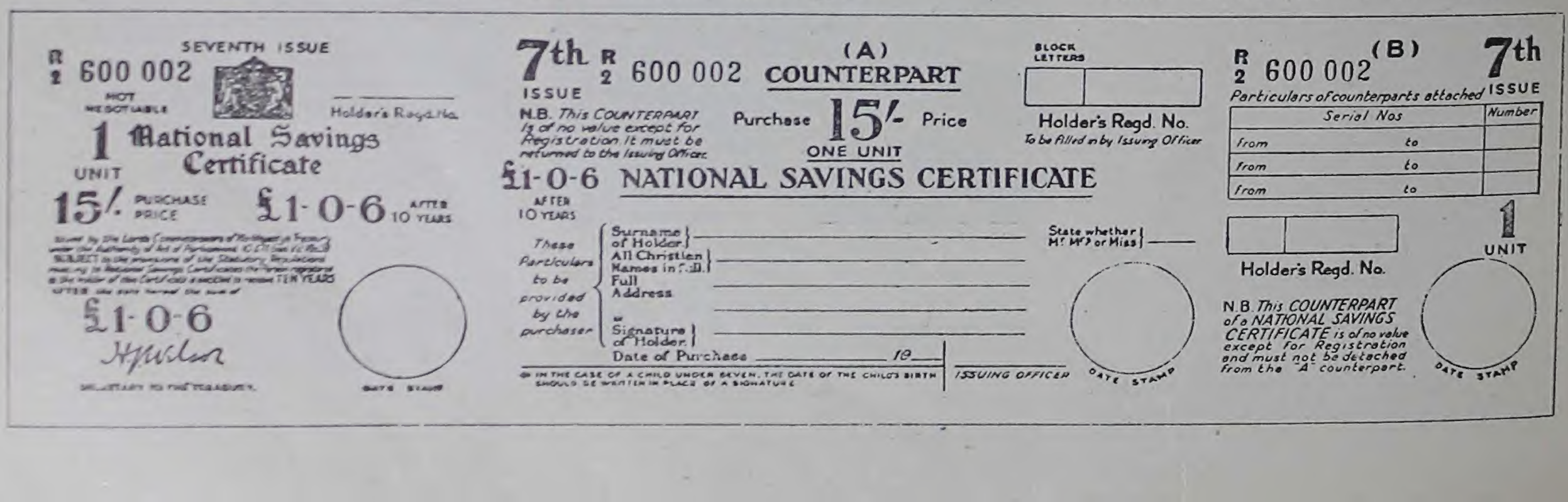
In November a reorganization of the drastic emergency arrangements to deal with civilian casualties was announced by the Minister of Health. The amended plans allowed the return of many medical men to their own practices, the Ministry henceforth providing for the full-time employment of only a nucleus of medical staff, while a big proportion of the specialist work was to be done by part-time officers who would receive a "retainer" of £500 a year and attend to private practice. In the staffing of first-aid posts local authorities were authorized to pay the medical officer in charge of each post in a vulnerable area a fee of £75 a year, with extra fees for sessions on duty. It was expected that the new arrangements also would make for more hospital accommodation for normal civilian sickness, which had been considerably curtailed by the original emergency orders reserving accommodation for air-raid casualties. It was curious, however, that there had been no overcrowding of hospitals on this account, as the amount of sickness (or at least the number of patients coming to hospital) had been much smaller than in peacetime.

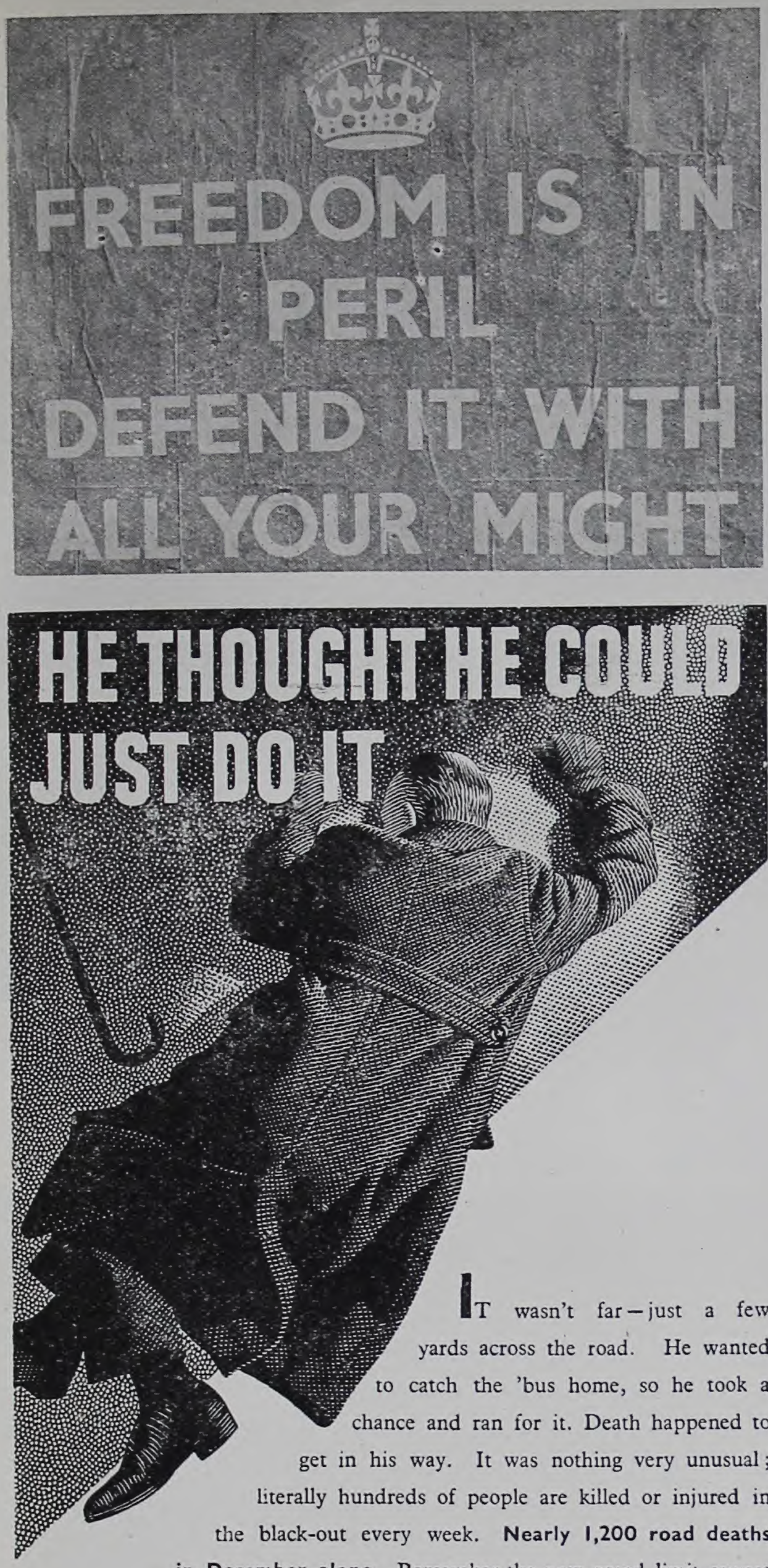
Following up his September announcement of the War Budget, Sir John Simon announced in the House of


POST OFFICE ISSUE OF
3% DEFENCE BONDS
The Bonds will be repayable at the rate of £101 for each £100 nominal value seven years from the date of purchase shewn in the first column of this book.
A Form of Application must be filled up in respect of the first purchase. For purchases after the first it will only be necessary to present the book when the purchase is made.
THIS BOOK IS OF NO VALUE TO ANY PERSON BUT THE REGISTERED HOLDER
BOND BOOK
No
3% DEFENCE BONDS
INTEREST PAYABLE HALF YEARLY ON 1st MAY & 1st NOV
Title, Name and Address of Bondholder
Date
Amount of Bonds purchased — Words / Figures
Signature of Receiving Officer
Office Stamp — to be affixed against each entry
NOTE — When full this book should be forwarded to the Controller, Post Office Savings Bank (Stock Branch), Harrogate, Yorks. A new book will then be issued.

PAYING FOR THE WAR

Above is shown the cover and interior of the Defence Bonds, put on sale on November 22, 1939. Purchasable in units of £5, they were issued at par, to bear interest at 3 per cent and repayable seven years from date of purchase. Below is one of the National Savings Certificates, for general and regular savings up to an individual limit of £500.


SEVENTH ISSUE
R 2 600 002
NOT NEGOTIABLE
Holder's Regd. No.
1 National Savings Certificate
UNIT
15/- PURCHASE PRICE
£1-0-6 AFTER 10 YEARS
SUBJECT to the provisions of the Statutory Regulations relating to National Savings Certificates the Person registered as the Holder of this Certificate is entitled to receive TEN YEARS AFTER the date hereof the sum of
£1-0-6
H. P. Wilson
SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY.
DATE STAMP
7th ISSUE R 2 600 002 (A) COUNTERPART
N.B. This COUNTERPART is of no value except for Registration. It must be returned to the Issuing Officer.
Purchase 15/- Price
ONE UNIT
£1-0-6 NATIONAL SAVINGS CERTIFICATE
AFTER 10 YEARS
These Particulars to be provided by the purchaser
Surname of Holder
All Christian Names in Full
Address
Signature of Holder
State whether Mr. Mrs. or Miss
Date of Purchase _____ 19__
IN THE CASE OF A CHILD UNDER SEVEN, THE DATE OF THE CHILD'S BIRTH SHOULD BE WRITTEN IN PLACE OF A SIGNATURE
ISSUING OFFICER
DATE STAMP
BLOCK LETTERS
Holder's Regd. No.
To be filled in by Issuing Officer
R 2 600 002 (B) 7th ISSUE
Particulars of counterparts attached
Serial Nos — from / to / Number
Holder's Regd. No.
1 UNIT
N.B. This COUNTERPART of a NATIONAL SAVINGS CERTIFICATE is of no value except for Registration and must not be detached from the "A" counterpart.
DATE STAMP







REACHING BRITAIN'S MILLIONS

In an age of publicity posters inevitably played a large part in the enlightenment and inspiration of the public during the war. Above are a few among the many notices displayed on hoardings and in newspapers. Others are to be seen in pages 538 and 550.







WASTE MATERIAL IS RAW MATERIAL

Above left, waste paper being unloaded from barges; above right, a lorry collecting scrap metal; below left, some of the twenty tons of tins dealt with each week at East Ham; below, meat bones retrieved from dustbins. Centre, Mr. H. G. Judd, Controller of Salvage to the Ministry of Supply.

Photos, Central Press; Planet News; L.N.A.; G.P.U; Vandyk

Commons on November 21 the issue on the morrow of new National Savings Certificates, designed to assist in financing the war (replacing the current issue), and also a new Defence Bond purchasable in units of £5. The purchase price of the new Savings Certificates remained unchanged at 15/–, but the interest was slightly increased so that the certificate would be worth 17/6 after five years and 20/6 after the full period of ten years. During the first week of these issues £4,125,000 was invested in the Certificates, and £5,000,000 in the Defence Bonds. This made a total that greatly exceeded the rate of savings of the best week of the first Great War (in February, 1917, when £7,000,000 worth of Certificates were bought). But still more encouraging was the maintenance of the average sales of Certificates and Bonds. It was announced in February, 1940, that in the first eleven weeks of the National Savings Campaign more than £80,000,000 had been paid by the public for the Certificates and Bonds, whereas the official expectations had been in the region of £100,000,000 for the first 12 months. Altogether there were some 50,000 savings groups, three-quarters of which had been formed in offices and factories, and new groups were being formed at the rate of 250 a day.

The trade figures as autumn passed into winter proved equally satisfactory, considering the special conditions, and in some respects would have been good in more normal times. Mr. Ronald Cross, Minister of Economic Warfare, in a review of affairs in the House of Commons on January 17, promised at least a continuance of the more satisfactory aspects of British exports and imports, owing to trade negotiations which Britain was then conducting with fourteen countries, including nearly all the neutrals of Europe. That same week the Board of Trade figures showed that imports and exports totalled more than was the case a year earlier, and the biggest increase in exports was for manufactured articles. In imports the greatest increase had been under food, drink and tobacco, proving the resources in spending power of the nation and also the ineffectiveness of the enemy's blockade measures.



DANGEROUS CURIOSITY

On the right are seen bursts of anti-aircraft shells, fired at a German raider over the Thames Estuary at the beginning of January, 1940. Below, spectators, foolishly exposing themselves to the danger of falling splinters, if not bombs, are watching the action oblivious of their own danger.

Photos, Planet News

The tendency of the people to "carry on" as usual while awaiting further developments was shown by the revival of night life in big centres. Towards the end of the year the theatres, night clubs and restaurants of London's West End were almost normal again, after having been virtually dead for a time, though uniforms largely replaced evening dress. Repertory companies were planning new "seasons" at numerous provincial theatres, and at least half a dozen musical comedies were doing good business in the West End by January. In sport, football certainly was badly hit by the wartime conditions, and it was suggested that the football public had lost much of its keenness for the game owing to the upsetting of the tables of points in the over-commercialized leagues and cup competitions. It was even complained that dog-racing interfered with the "gate" of such games as were played by professionals. The big membership of mainly young men in the numerous cycling clubs was affected by enlistments, and club meetings were mostly cancelled during the autumn; but before the end of the year not even the black-out regulations had prevented the majority of clubs again having their runs at the week-end, or organizing cycle races. The two hundred youth hostels in the country were still open, and proved a boon to the cyclists. Pigeon fanciers were reduced to holding short races, as they could no longer get their special trains and other transport facilities, but they refused to give up their hobby altogether. In this they reflected the spirit of less specialized sportsmen and, indeed, of the British public as a whole. Those who had lost sport by the cancelling of "shoots" were consoled by the official encouragement to shoot wood-pigeons—which were accused of eating more of our crops than we could afford in wartime.

Entertainment and Sport

On the whole, abnormal weather conditions throughout January interfered with sport more even than the war. The first part of January, after a cold December, was the coldest in Britain since 1894. At many points along the coast the sea froze. The Thames was frozen for about eight miles between Teddington and Sunbury, and also at Kingston. Twenty-five degrees of frost were registered in London, more at many places in the



country. Stretches of the Mersey, Humber and Severn were covered with ice. As the snowfalls increased later in the month, transport by rail and road was interfered with, though the worst came with a partial thaw in the first week of February. These remarkable weather conditions remained undescribed in the Press or in the B.B.C. news bulletins until the end of January. Weather news generally had been suppressed from the start of the war, to avoid giving information to the enemy.

Against these comparatively placid events the Ministerial changes announced from 10, Downing Street on the evening of January 5 caused a sensation, at least in the Press. Mr. Leslie Hore-Belisha, who had been regarded as the most successful Minister in Mr. Chamberlain's Cabinet, with the possible exception of Mr. Winston Churchill, had resigned his post as Secretary of State for War, while Lord Macmillan had resigned from the Ministry of Information. The King had accepted the resignations and approved the following appointments: Mr. Oliver Stanley, M.P., Secretary of State for War; Sir Andrew Duncan, President of the Board of Trade; Sir John Reith, Minister of Information.

It was, of course, the suddenly announced replacement of the War Minister which occasioned surprise and even some consternation. Mr. Hore-Belisha had held ministerial office continuously since 1931, when the first National Government was formed, and since his accession to the War Office in May, 1937, he had done most valuable work in modernizing the organization of the army, especially in "democratizing" the officering of the service. Speculation was stimulated by the publication of Mr. Hore-Belisha's letter to the Prime Minister, declining an alternative post which, it turned out, was the Board of Trade: "I wish," said the ex-Minister, "I had felt able to accept the important office which you have been good enough to offer me in your reconstructed Government, but for the reasons I gave you verbally this morning I regretfully cannot see my way to do it." And Mr. Chamberlain, expressing in his reply his regret at the Minister's decision, paid what he called "my sincere tribute to your work at the War Office and to the important reforms you have carried out."

That was all the information vouchsafed to the nation by its sphinx-like Prime Minister, except that his letter was addressed to "My dear Leslie," who was assured: "It is a great satisfaction to me that there is not now and never has been any difference between us on policy and in particular on the necessity for prosecuting the war with the utmost determination to a successful issue." This assurance was not uncalled for, because the public was plainly quite unprepared for the War Minister's resignation. When Parliament re-opened ten days later, Members were prepared for a fierce debate, but beforehand the feeling had got round that there was to be no quarrel, and that the late Minister accepted the situation. Mr. Hore-Belisha told the House that no conflict of views and no want of confidence had existed between him and his colleagues, while on the general subject of his army reforms he had not thought that the Army could be made too democratic to fight for democracy.



'GENERAL POST' OF EVACUATION

Many businesses, as well as schoolchildren, were evacuated from the big cities when war broke out. Once adequate air-raid shelters had been provided, many schools which had been previously closed were allowed to re-open. The top photograph shows children at school undergoing a gas-mask inspection; above, staff of the Ministry of Health in what was formerly the solarium of a health establishment at Blackpool.

Photos, Fox; Keystone

" I have always thought, as an idealist," he said, " that the Army should be part of the nation and not apart from the nation." Mr. Chamberlain amplified his former tribute, and denied any knowledge of " any serious difference of opinion between my right honourable friend and the Army Council or any member of it."

The House of Commons soon dropped attempts to probe into the personal affair, and Opposition Leaders took an opportunity to air criticism of the composition of the Cabinet. It had been generally felt for some time that a smaller War Cabinet, consisting of members not burdened with departmental duties, should control the conduct of the war. The Government showed no intention of listening to such proposals, but early in the following month the Prime Minister sprung another surprise by confessing that the effective control was in the hands of a " Big Four "—as the Press put it—of Ministers who formed a kind of inner cabinet under the presidency of Lord Chatfield.



RIGOURS OF A BRITISH WARTIME WINTER

Some idea of the severe weather which beset Britain as well as the Continent during the winter of 1939-40 may be gained from these photographs. Above, a car is almost buried in the snow at Poynton, near Macclesfield. Below, ducks walking on the ice-bound river at Teddington Reach. The Thames was frozen over for the first time for 45 years.

Photos, Fox ; Topical







REGENTS OF TWO BALKAN STATES

Hungary is a monarchy with a vacant throne, the functions of a monarch being exercised by H.S.H. Admiral Nicolas Horthy de Nagybanya (left) as Regent. Above is H.R.H. Prince Paul of Yugoslavia, Prince Regent of that country until the coming of age of the King, Peter, in September, 1941.

Photos, Wide World





DANUBIAN MONARCHS

Tsar Boris III of Bulgaria (above) succeeded to the throne on the abdication of his father in October, 1918. Carol II of Rumania (right) renounced his right of succession in 1925, but in 1930 he returned to Rumania and was proclaimed king in virtue of a special act of parliament.

Photos, Oscar Marcus ; E.N.A.

Chapter 54

THE BALKAN PROBLEM: GERMANY, ITALY AND THE ALLIES IN A DIPLOMATIC WAR

The Alinement of Forces in the Balkan Peninsula—Balkan States' Desire for Peace—British Guarantees to Rumania and Greece — Nazis Covet Rumania's Oil — Anglo-Turkish Friendship — Allies' interests in Yugoslavia—German Aims in the Balkans—The Attitude of Italy—Policies of Hungary and Bulgaria

For centuries the Balkan Peninsula, that neglected corner of south-eastern Europe, had been the scene of recurring wars between a mixture of races such as could be found nowhere else: Romans fought Teutons, Magyars fought Slavs, Slavs battled with Turks. These wars, although fought between Balkan countries, often gave evidence of the hidden hand of the great Powers, and the Peninsula has even better right to the title "Cockpit of Europe" than Belgium, which has so often seen her territory devastated.

Menaced on All Sides

Yet, in the first three months of the Second Great War, while the opposing armies remained immobile on the Western Front and ruthless minelaying and submarine action characterized hostilities at sea, the Balkans remained at peace. The countries of south-eastern Europe, which had so often consumed their resources in internecine strife, were anxious now to keep out of the great conflict. Although the differences between them remained acute, their history during this period was one of a painful struggle for unity—a unity which most of them considered would be their best safeguard against conquest piecemeal by their big and aggressive neighbours, Germany and Russia.

Only a greater menace from outside their frontiers could induce them to shelve even temporarily their grievances and claims against each other. This menace was provided by Germany when she ruthlessly overran Poland, and to a still greater extent by Russia, who not only participated in the division of Poland, but had invaded the small and gallant nation of Finland. But in spite of their peril diplomatic moves for unity among the Balkan nations took place with extreme slowness—born of decades of suspicion, grievance, claims and counter-claims, and the intrigues of some great Powers.

These countries of the Balkan Peninsula reflected the state of affairs that existed in western Europe before the Second Great War, in that they included "satisfied" Powers and Powers with real or imaginary grievances. The satisfied countries were Rumania, who had more than doubled her territory and population as a result of the First Great War—largely at the expense of Hungary; Greece, who acquired an additional outlet to the Aegean at Bulgaria's expense; Yugoslavia, and Turkey. At the end of the war of 1914–18 Rumania and Yugoslavia obtained between them from Hungary the fertile Banat, rich in minerals in its eastern part. Turkey, though on the losing side in the Great War, had restored her economy and prestige under the rule of Kemal Ataturk, and her alliance with Britain had placed her in the ranks of the satisfied Powers.

Against these countries, in the diplomatic war which had gone on ever since the Peace Treaties of 1918 and 1919, were ranged Hungary, who had lost the greatest and richest of her domains, and Bulgaria, with claims on Rumania and Greece.

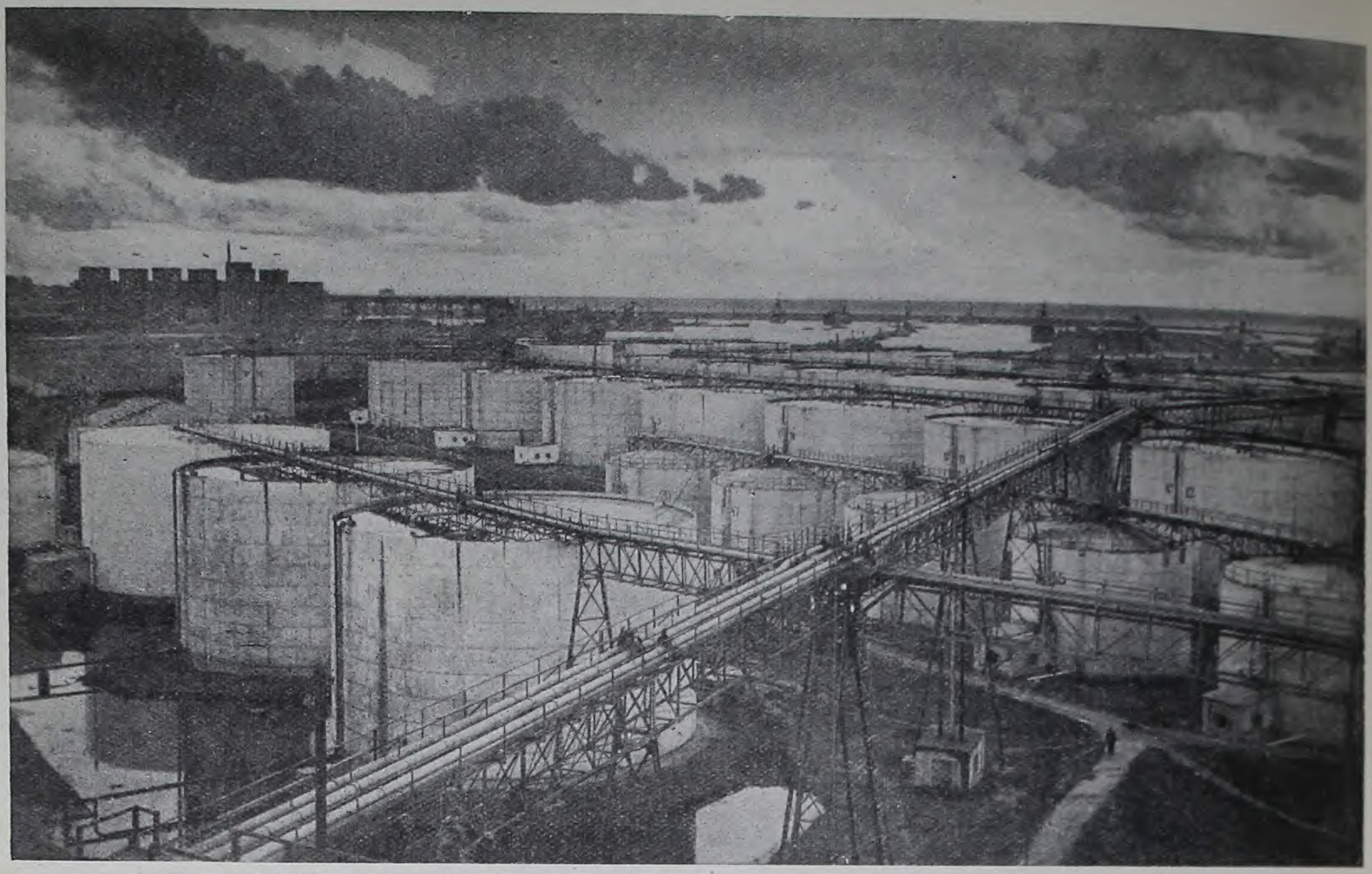
Britain had shown her political and economic interest in Rumania and Greece by guaranteeing their integrity —an unmistakable warning both to Italy (who might have been tempted to push on farther after her conquest of Albania during the Easter of 1939) and to Germany, should the latter be inclined to try another stroke like her march into Czechoslovakia. After the outbreak of the Second Great War Britain was interested in maintaining her investments and trade with Rumania and Greece, and with the other countries of south-eastern Europe, and was vitally concerned also, in collaboration with the French, in stopping their supplies to Germany.

Outside Russia, Rumania was the largest oil producer in Europe, and oil was one of Germany's main war essentials. To develop her oil wells Rumania had borrowed abroad, and more than one-third of the foreign capital invested in her 150 oil undertakings was in the hands of British-controlled firms, while French and Belgian interests controlled a further one-fifth of the invested capital. In times of peace nearly one-third of Rumania's oil exports, averaging some 5,000,000 tons annually, went to Germany, while Britain came a bad second with only 15 per cent. Britain's economic interests also included investments in many large Rumanian industrial concerns, and a large share of the Danube river traffic. The principle which inspired Britain's guarantee of Rumania against German aggression was the same, of course, as that for which she had declared war on Germany —namely, the upholding of the integrity of smaller nations against German aggression. At the same time, Britain's valid interests inspired the view that a Nazi conquest of Rumania would enormously add to Germany's resources, and open up unpleasant possibilities for British possessions in the Middle East. Similarly unpleasant possibilities might have been opened up by Italian control of Greece, with her excellent naval harbours in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Turkey, whose abhorrence of aggression was equalled by her probity in respecting her pledged word, was a very desirable ally for Britain. Her control of the Dardanelles was an essential factor to prevent the march of aggressive Imperialism towards the Middle East. Her strong and tried army had been for many years a sure guarantee of peace in the Balkans. Her friendships with her neighbours, based on mutual respect, were a stabilizing influence; while the proximity of her territory to Irak (where Britain had large oil interests), to Palestine (the source of recurring racial trouble in the years since the Great War), and to Egypt barred the way to dictators' enterprises on the road to India. On October 19, a few weeks after the outbreak of the Second World War, Anglo-Turkish friendship was sealed by the conclusion of a Pact. A similar treaty was concluded between Turkey and France. (*See* Chapter 27).

A Faithful Ally

Britain, for the same moral and strategic reasons as in the case of Rumania, Greece and Turkey, had also every interest in the preservation of the integrity of Yugoslavia, in whose copper and bauxite mines large amounts of Anglo-French capital were invested.



VAST OIL DEPOT AT RUMANIA'S BLACK SEA PORT

Constanza, with a dock area of over 150 acres, is an important seaport of Rumania. It exports an immense quantity of petroleum, for which many storage tanks can be seen in the photograph above. Constanza lies on the Black Sea, in that province of the Dobruja which has long been a bone of contention between Bulgaria and Rumania.

Photo, M. Henchoz

In the First Great War the states of Serbia and Montenegro (later incorporated into the new kingdom of Yugoslavia) had been allies of Britain and France. In summary, Anglo-French aims in south-eastern Europe were these : Britain and France wished these countries, under the leadership of Turkey, to co-operate and form a united " front " capable of resisting aggression from any quarter. At the same time the Allies tried to prevent the natural resources of these countries being used by Germany to circumvent the Allied blockade.

German aims, in accordance with Nazi psychology, were of a domineering character. Ever since Hitler's advent to power the dream of Nazi economists had been an industrialized Germany and an agricultural Balkan hinterland. The countries of south-eastern Europe were not encouraged to develop their own industries. Rather did Germany look to them to supply the ores, wheat, cattle and oil necessary to the maintenance of her manufacturing population. The exchange of German industrial products for Balkan natural products had, under unscrupulous Nazi commercial methods, given Germany almost a stranglehold on Balkan trade. By selling their products on credit, most of the Balkan countries had accumulated credits within Germany, in liquidation of which Germany forced them to take German manufactures. Ever present in the Nazi mind had been the spectre of the British blockade, but so long as Germany had this immense hinterland to draw on she felt to some extent reassured.

It was significant that the most ardent supporters among Nazi industrialists for this Balkan " granary " policy were those who had identified themselves earlier with the dreams of a Berlin-Baghdad railway. A powerful argument, which Germany did not hesitate to use, was the presence of the ruthless armed forces of the Reich near the frontiers—an argument which after the successive rape of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland was not lost on the Balkan nations.

Italy's interest in south-eastern Europe, apart from her considerable trade and investments, was to reinforce her position as an Imperial Power. With Hungary and the Balkan countries to draw on, she would be much less dependent on supplies from overseas, all of which had to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar or the Suez Canal, both under British control. Politically, as a Power with unsatisfied aspirations, the troubled state of the Balkans might be utilized to further Italian expansionist aims. Italy's friendship with Hungary, also a Power with a grievance against the Peace Treaties, was very close, and the opportunist policy of these two countries in the Balkan area had been a powerful factor against stabilization.

The disagreements between the Great Powers accentuated those among the countries of south-eastern Europe. Britain's interest with Turkey in maintenance of the status quo (except in so far as it could be altered by arbitration) ran counter to the policy of Italy and Hungary. Germany's desire to see the Balkans and Hungary geared up to the Nazi industrial machine was in conflict with the interests of both Britain and Italy. The Balkan States were suspicious of each other and were distrustful of the Great Powers.

Conflicting Interests

This was the position when Russia's undeclared war on Finland, beginning on November 30, introduced a new factor into the situation and promised



THE PLOUGHSHARE PROVES A VITAL ARM

The hard winter of 1939 caused considerable delay in the ploughing up of grassland, for which the Government granted to farmers a subsidy of £2 per acre. As soon as milder conditions prevailed ploughing went on from dawn to dusk—and even by moonlight. Our photograph shows grassland being turned over by the plough at Richmond in Yorkshire.

Photo, Fox

WHEN BRITAIN WAS IN WINTER'S ICY GRIP

The extreme cold which prevailed during the winter of 1939–40 in Britain no less than on the Continent is well exemplified in these two photographs, the one showing a snowbound train, one of many that were held up in this manner, and the other depicting ice-floes on the South-East coast. So severe was the cold at this spot that the tide was prevented from reaching within 1,500 yards of the shore.

Photos, Topical ; G.P.U.



Photo, Central Press

A NERVE CENTRE OF A.-A. DEFENCE

Here is a scene in one of the Control Centres of the Observer Corps, where messages are received from observation posts regarding the movements of all unidentified aircraft approaching or flying over any part of Britain. Around the table are the "plotters," who arrange the symbols according to reports received. Clarifying these reports are the supervisors with their croupiers' "rakes," and on the dais above are "tellers," who pass information forward to the Higher Command of the R.A.F. Seated high in the corner is a "recorder," who plots an accurate record of every track.



RUMANIA'S KING IN THE COVETED PROVINCE

In January, 1940, King Carol of Rumania paid his first official visit to Bessarabia since his accession to the throne, and in the course of a speech emphasized Rumania's determination to defend that province and all her frontiers against aggression. Above, King Carol is seen with M. Tatarescu, the Prime Minister, arriving at Constanza.

Photo, Keystone



ITALY AND HUNGARY AFFIRM COMMON INTERESTS

Above, left to right, are Count Ciano ; Count Teleki, Hungarian premier ; Count Csaky, Hungarian foreign minister ; and Signor Mussolini, photographed on the occasion of the Hungarian ministers' arrival in Rome on April 17, 1939. The problems of Central and Danubian Europe were discussed in a series of talks.

Photo, Keystone

to bring into alinement the policies of at least two of the Great Powers, namely, Britain and Italy. Both were averse to an extension of Bolshevist influence in the Balkans ; while Stalin's approach to Rumania's oil wells could hardly be welcome even to Germany. Faced with the joint Nazi-Bolshevik threat, the movement for Balkan unity against aggression gained new impetus. The prospects of such unity depended largely on Italy, and a survey of Italian policy will, therefore, serve to explain many of the diplomatic shuffles behind the Balkan scenes.

Italy 'On the Fence'

In the early stages of the Second Great War the attitude of Italy, the only major non-belligerent, was anxiously watched by the smaller, exposed countries of south-eastern Europe. Italy deemed it in her interest to keep out of war and to reduce to a minimum the hindrances caused to her economy. At the same time, with the Allies and Germany heavily engaged elsewhere, the war presented to her an opportunity for extending influence in the Balkans. She first endeavoured to dispel the suspicion created by her invasion of Albania a few months before, and withdrew her troops on the Albanian-Greek frontier—a gesture much welcomed by Greece. The next move was forced on Italy by reported Soviet activities on the Hungarian frontier, following Russia's invasion of Poland and later of Finland. Although Mussolini did not openly commit himself to sharing the sympathies of the Italian people for the Finns, fear of Bolshevist expansion in the Balkans led to a meeting of the Fascist Grand Council early in December, 1939, and a statement was issued.

The Council referred for the first time unequivocally to Italy's extended interests in the Danube and Balkan area, but Italy's ties with Germany were reaffirmed. No mention was made of Soviet Russia. This statement was interpreted by many observers to mean that Italy did not yet wish to drop her intimate Axis connexion with Germany, while it might still be useful in furthering her own unsatisfied aspirations ; at the same time, while she wished for Balkan unity against possible Russian aggression in south-eastern Europe, Italy did not wish this unity to be attained under the aegis of Turkey, now allied to Britain. Italian policy was carried a step further in a speech by Count Ciano, the Foreign Minister, towards the middle of December, 1939. He claimed that Italy, through the annexation of Albania, had become a Balkan Power and that her interest in the Peninsula was justified in history, by geography and by tradition. After reviewing the friendly relations enjoyed by Italy with each Balkan Power and with Hungary, he said that it was in their common interest to maintain peace in that area. Italy, therefore, watched with deep sympathy every effort by these small nations to settle their differences peaceably, and was willing to give advice and help.

At the same time, Count Ciano discounted the utility of forming a Balkan *bloc*, possibly because its formation would be impossible without Turkey, and Turkey's policy was in harmony with that of Britain. Nor could such a *bloc* be formed without Hungarian participation, and so long as Hungary insisted on satisfaction of her claims against Rumania (especially regarding Transylvania), unity could not be obtained. As it became ever more apparent that Germany was deeply involved with Russia, whose Bolshevistic ideals were the antithesis of Italian Fascism, Italian policy seemed



HUNGARY'S CAPITAL ON THE DANUBE

Hungary's fear of Soviet Russia drew her nearer to Italy as being the implacable foe of Bolshevism. Above is a panorama of Hungary's beautiful capital, Budapest, with the Danube flowing in the background. During the summer of 1919 Rumanian forces occupied Budapest for three months, and this was one of the reasons for Hungary's long-standing grievance against Rumania.

Photo, E.N.A.

to veer more towards that of the Allies.

In January, 1940, Count Csaky, the Hungarian Foreign Minister, interviewed Count Ciano in Rome, and it was reported that Italy used her influence to induce Hungary to adopt a more friendly attitude towards Rumania, even to the extent of temporarily abandoning territorial claims. It was also reported, though officially denied, that a pact in the nature of a military alliance had been concluded between Italy and Hungary, ostensibly with the aim of checking Russian expansion southwards. Italy's policy still remained opportunistic, however. A typical Italian comment on the Ciano-Csaky talks was :

"Italy, unlike certain Great Powers [i.e. Britain and France], harbours no aggressive designs against Russia, but merely intends to check that expansion of Communism which menaces the civilization, order and health of Europe. Let Soviet Russia remain quiet within her own frontiers, and Italy will have no reason to oppose her."

Italy thus kept a free hand in her relations with the Balkan countries and with Germany and the Allies. If it turned out that the danger from Russia and German-Russian friendship should be overestimated or should recede, she would still remain unfettered in her actions.

The two countries most concerned with Italian policy were Hungary and Rumania, although the absence of a united front against aggression was a menace to all. Hungary's hatred of Bolshevism was deep and sincere. The atrocities and depredations of Hungarian Bolsheviks under the short-lived regime of Bela Kun in 1919 had left an impression which two decades of orderly Government had failed to eradicate. The presence of Russian troops on Hungary's Carpathian frontier, combined with Hungarian sympathy for Finland—a nation with which Magyars are racially connected—were the two outstanding factors in the recent history of the nation. Just as deep, however, was Hungary's sense of grievance against Rumania, whose soldiers, in the chaos that followed the collapse of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, had invaded Hungary, pillaged the land and—so Hungarians maintained—seized large stretches of territory in defiance of justice and the orders of the Allied Supreme War Council.

Hungary's Paradoxical Policy

Hungary's policy since the Russian invasion of Finland had been paradoxical. Her fear of the Russian "wolf" and hatred of her opulent Rumanian neighbour (to whom she had lost the greater part of Transylvania in 1919) have been compared to the behaviour of a little girl who, menaced by the wolf, says: "Please, wolf, let me eat my cake (Transylvania) first." The Russian danger was the most pressing. Six days after the invasion of Finland, Graf Teleki, the Hungarian Premier, while emphasizing the continuity of Hungary's foreign policy, stated that the equipment of the army had been completed in numerous respects and that the armaments industry had reached a desirable capacity.

"A new war has broken out between the courageous Finnish nation, which is related to us, and Russia," Graf Teleki declared. "It is a war quite separate from the war between Germany and France and Britain, but which, nevertheless, as it effects the history of European peoples, can be described as complementary. This war and the battles of our Finnish brothers fill us with concern and sorrow."

The Minister forecast great changes in Hungarian markets.

Hungary's claims on Rumania, temporarily in the background when the Russian menace was first realized, came again to the fore as Finland's successful resistance caused Hungarian military experts to revise their opinion of Russia's military might. Hungary began to feel more confident of defending alone, or with Italy's help, her frontier in the Carpathians. Certain Hungarian circles professed not to be concerned for Hungary's fate but for that of Rumania, which had lost Poland as a neighbour and had received Russia instead. What would happen if the Russians should invade Rumania, and Rumanian resistance collapsed? That, experts argued, would bring Russia to the Hungarian frontiers on two sides; and while Hungary would do nothing to weaken Rumania's defence, it was plain that the satisfaction of Hungarian claims in Transylvania would also give Hungary a strong, natural line of defence in the Transylvanian mountain barrier.

Hungary's reaffirmation of her friendship with Italy did not allay suspicions in the Balkans that her closest ties were with Germany. It was conceivable that in certain circumstances Germany would give Hungary more effective aid



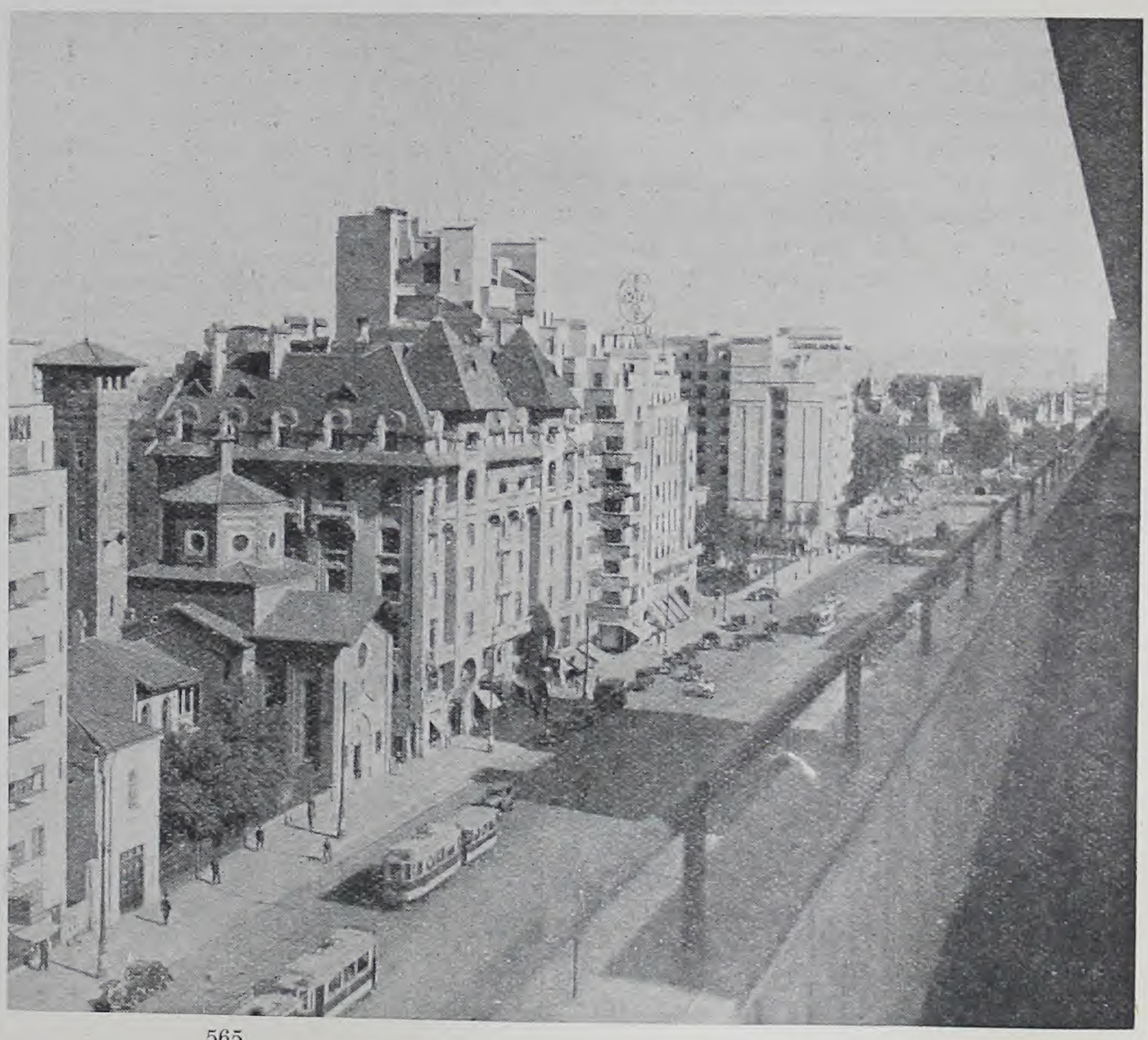


CAPITALS OF FOUR BALKAN STATES

Above—left, the modern cathedral of St. Alexander Nevski at Sofia, capital of Bulgaria ; right, the ancient Acropolis, dominating the city of Athens, lovely capital of Greece. Below—left, ministerial buildings in Belgrade, capital of Yugoslavia ; right, modern architecture in the Boulevard Bratianu in Rumania's capital, Bucharest.

Photos, Dorien Leigh ; Paul Popper ; M. Henchoz







BALKAN BREEDING GROUNDS OF DISCONTENT

The map above shows areas shaded which gave rise to considerable friction among adjoining states. After the First Great War Rumania was given Transylvania (formerly Hungarian), the Bukovina (formerly Austrian), and Bessarabia (formerly Russian). Part of her south-eastern province of Dobruja had been taken from Bulgaria during the Second Balkan War of 1913. The Dedeagatch (Alexandroupolis) district of Greece is also the subject of territorial claims by Bulgaria.

in recovering her lost province than would Italy. It was not lost on observers that the discovery of a "separatist" conspiracy in Transylvania was followed by the repetition by Graf Teleki of Hungary's revisionist claims. Further, Ba kan countries wondered, if a military alliance had been concluded between Italy and Hungary, how Italy could give material aid to Hungary with whom she had no common frontier. The obvious route would be through a suspicious Yugoslavia, on whom Hungary also had territorial claims. Hungary's contribution to unity in south-eastern Europe seemed to grow smaller as the present war progressed.

Hungary's unsatisfied territorial claims did not intimidate King Carol of Rumania. In many respects the position of his country was the most unhappy. In the north was Russia, with claims on the Rumanian province of Bessarabia. In the east was Hungary. In the south Bulgaria vented her grievances regarding the Dobruja territory, which she had received by the treaty of Bucharest in 1918 but had lost to Rumania in 1920. Russian soldiers now stood on the old frontier of Poland, a former ally of Rumania. The Germans were pressing exorbitant economic demands on Rumania. British, French and Italian agents were active. But through the first three months of the Second Great War Rumania presented an outwardly calm façade.

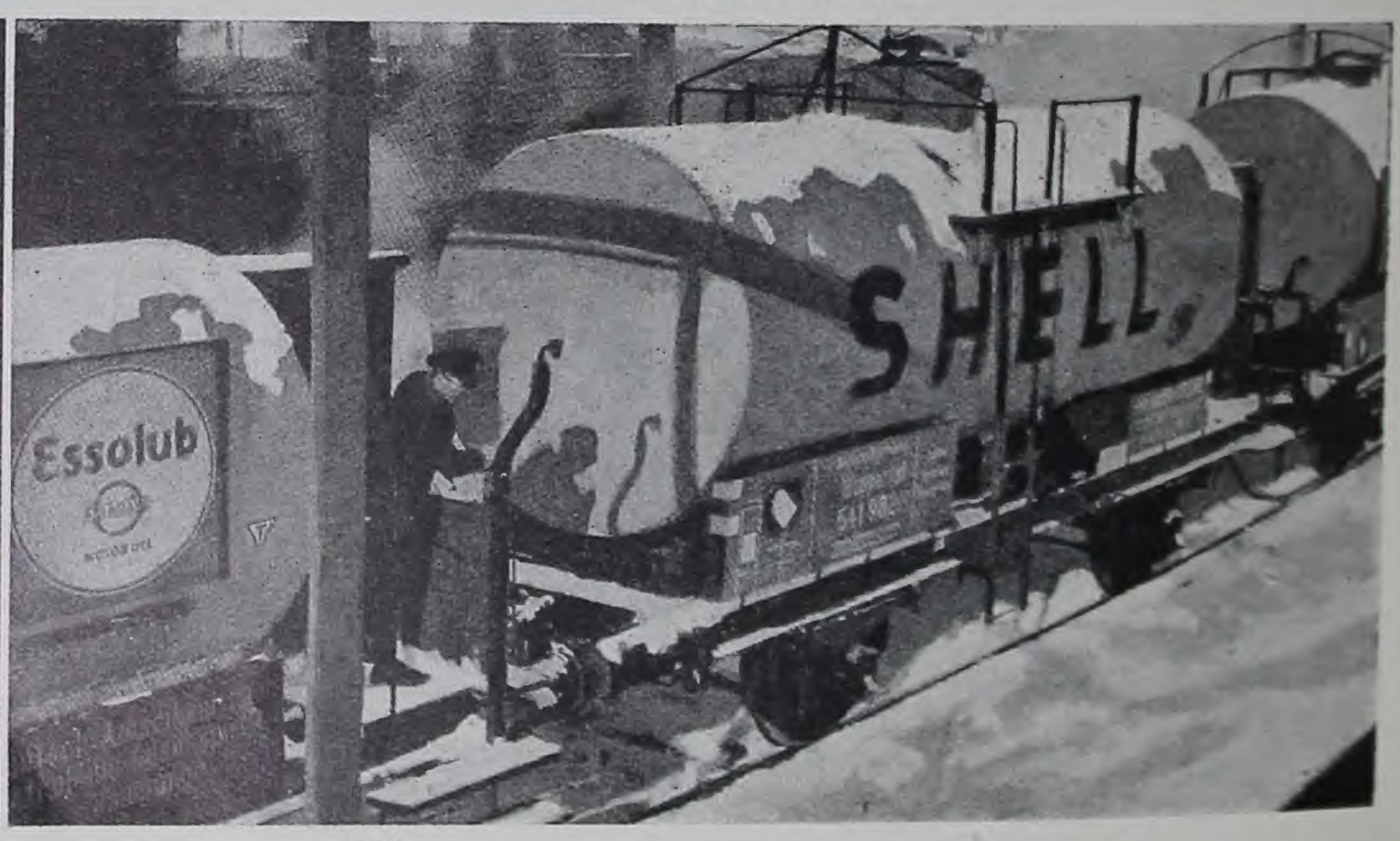
In the middle of November Germany sent a strong economic mission to Rumania under the leadership of Dr. Clodius, to obtain increasing quantities of Rumanian oil and to solve the difficulties of Danubian transport. Soon afterwards Lord Lloyd, President of the British Council, arrived, with the reported aims of strengthening Anglo-Rumanian relations and furthering the establishment of a Balkan *bloc* under the leadership of Turkey. Visits of Rumanian diplomats to Turkey and Yugoslavia were frequent. Rumania's resources were of supreme importance for the German economy. Six months before war broke out Germany had signed a five-year economic agreement with Rumania which, in the words of the German negotiator, Dr. Wohltat, "comprises almost the whole field of economy of the two nations." The markets of the two countries were made complementary to each other. But the outbreak of war interrupted the plan,

NAZIS' COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

Dr. Karl Clodius (below left), Nazi economic expert, travelled from one country to another in an effort to secure more of the raw materials Germany needed so badly, in particular oil from Rumania, tank cars laden with which are seen below at Ploesti, ready for transport to the Reich.

Photos, Planet News ; E.N.A.

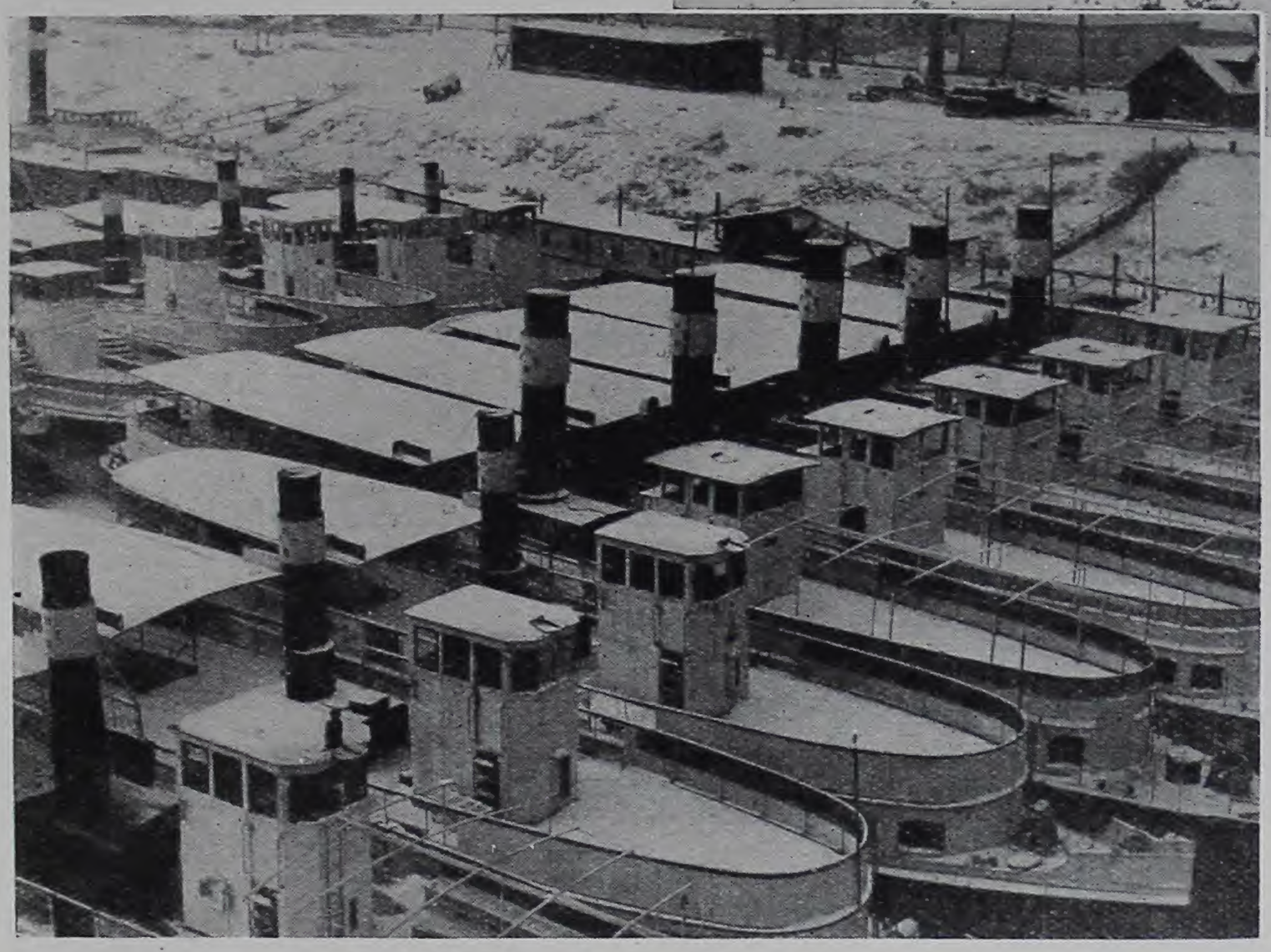




quite apart from the fact that King Carol, a shrewd monarch, had no wish to "put all his eggs in one basket," and did not watch with complacency the gearing of the Rumanian market to the German war machine.

The first concern of Dr. Clodius was to obtain a more favourable rate of exchange for the German mark in relation to the Rumanian lei. He pointed to the fact that the lei had decreased in value, to which Rumanian experts countered that the prices of Rumanian products, owing to war demands, had increased. In ordinary times it paid Rumania to exchange her agricultural and mineral products for German machinery, but now that world prices of wheat and oil had risen, she preferred foreign currency to German industrial products, which she could





ICE HOLDS UP DANUBE TRAFFIC

The freezing of the Danube during the hard winter of 1939-40 prevented much-needed supplies of Rumanian oil from being transported by river to Germany. Above is a desolate landing-stage on the ice-covered river, and below are steamers at their moorings, waiting for the thaw to come.

Photos, Holly

then buy cheaper elsewhere. Germany pressed her demands so roughly that the Rumanian Cabinet, under the premier, Argetoianu, resigned.

Dr. Clodius made a hurried departure from Bucharest, and though, when he returned some days afterwards, he was able to get an agreement, it was on less favourable terms than he had hoped. Instead of getting 45 per cent of Rumania's oil production, only one-third was allotted to Germany. The rate of the lei was fixed at 49·50 to the mark instead of 75, as Dr. Clodius had demanded. To get the materials to Germany, Dr. Clodius offered to supply 180 locomotives and 3,000 wagons. One of the allegations of the German delegation was that Rumania's oil production had decreased in recent years owing to deliberate sabotage by French and British companies, which, as previously mentioned, owned a large part of the capital invested in the oil industry. The Germans also alleged that Anglo-French interests had purchased most of the Rumanian petrol. A successful Anglo-French economic action was the leasing and laying up of all available Danube lighters. Since the Germans were dependent on the Danube route, they had to pay fantastic prices for the hire of the few lighters left.

In peacetime Rumania's chief exports to Germany had gone via the Black Sea and Mediterranean, but the British blockade put a stop to this. The direct railway routes between Rumania and Germany were said to be in a deplorable state owing to neglect by the Russians, through whose territory, acquired from the Poles, the lines ran. (This neglect may have been a matter of deliberate policy.) While negotiating with the Germans King Carol had to face Russian demands. The "Communist International," the Moscow organ of the Comintern, declared on December 6, 1939:

Russia's Threats to Rumania

"A policy of minority oppression and exploitation of the masses exists in Transylvania, Bessarabia, the Dobruja and Bukovina. The Communists urge all workers to take up the decisive fight against war agitators, reactionaries and Chauvinists who inflame the Rumanian people against the oppressed minorities."

The same newspaper referred to the necessity for a mutual assistance pact between Russia and Rumania on the lines of those signed by the Baltic States.

"Doubtless," said the paper, "the peace lessons of Russia's pacts with the Baltic States have not been lost on Rumania. Rumania has been able to convince herself that in the war between Germany and Poland the Western Powers could not help their Ally."

King Carol's answer to these demands and to those of Hungary was practical and to the point. It was announced



*** CAROL'S MOAT, ⁘ NATURAL BARRIER
B.=BUKOVINA, C.&M.=CRIŞANA & MARAMUREŞ

RUMANIA'S DEFENCES

Bucharest announced on January 12, 1940, that a defensive system running for some 300 miles along the Hungarian and Russian frontiers had almost reached completion. Known as "Carol's Dyke," the system comprised a moat 40 feet wide, anti-tank traps and pill boxes. The moat linked up with numerous rivers and lakes

that Rumania had completed an intricate series of fortifications around her frontiers, including a 40-foot-wide moat at various points. On the Hungarian frontier fortifications based on those of the Maginot Line, with an intricate series of tank traps, pill boxes, communication trenches and underground passages, were completed and tested by artillery fire. King Carol travelled from one end to the other of his domains and made three important speeches. At Oradea Mare, near the Hungarian frontier, he said on Christmas Day:

"Rumania attaches great importance to her frontier defences. Rumanians wish for peace. We have no intention of taking that which does not belong to us, but we will defend our own."

At Constanza, in the east, King Carol reaffirmed Rumania's intention to defend her integrity and independence; while M. Tatarescu, the Premier, announced that Rumania would mobilize all labour on the fields and in factories to maintain national unity. But the king's most important speech was made in the province of Bessarabia, acquired from the Bolsheviks after the collapse of the Tsarist Empire. He said:

Rumania's Stand

"Every time I come to this corner of the earth between the Pruth and the Dniester, I assure you that I come to a country which has been, is, and always will be Rumanian land."

"The cities which have for centuries been the sentinels of a frontier must for us all be the sentinels of what will eternally remain Rumanian."

Italian influence made some progress in Rumania during the first three months of the Second Great War, partly by the conclusion of a subsidiary trade agreement, but especially because of Italy's reported counsels to Hungary to use moderation in her claims on Rumania, and of her anti-Bolshevik stand.

Generally speaking, Rumania's sympathies and interests were with the Allies. She was not, however, prepared to make territorial concessions to either Hungary or Bulgaria to further the cause of Balkan unity. Rumania, as a member of the Balkan Entente (the other members of which were Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia), sympathized with and had everything to gain by a common front against aggression, but had also to take into account her proximity to Russia and Germany, while remembering that Britain, who had pledged aid in the event of German aggression, was much farther away.

Bulgaria, the smallest Balkan country, had a very strong strategic position. Situated between Rumania, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece, her friendship was important for all four Powers. Since Turkey's control of the Dardanelles was unassailable by frontal attack, Bulgaria held the back door to the Straits and her value as an ally to an aggressive power, either Russia or Germany, was unquestionable. Bulgaria's attitude to a united Balkan front had been consistent ever since the war of 1914–18. She had renounced the use of force for the satisfaction of her claims, especially as regards the Dobruja, but was not prepared to lend support to the united front until they were satisfied, or until at least some promise of satisfaction had been given. Her Government's policy was further complicated by the facts that King Boris was linked through marriage with the Royal Family of Italy, that the Bulgarians were pro-Russian in sentiment, and that economically the country was largely dependent on Germany.

On the other hand, while Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia were convinced of the wisdom of satisfying, at least in part, Bulgaria's claims on Rumania, they wished to know that these demands would stop there; a speech by M. Kosseivanoff, the Bulgarian Premier, in the summer of 1939, reaffirming Bulgaria's claims to her 1913 frontiers, made the three countries reluctant to take the initiative. Within Bulgaria's 1913 frontiers had been included territories of Yugoslavia and Greece. In particular, by cession of part of Thrace to Greece after the war of 1914–18 she had lost her former coastline on the Aegean. Russia's invasion of Finland was a shock to much of the pro-Russian sentiment among Bulgaria's hard-working and democratic peasants, but did not materially alter their regard for their great Slav brother, who had assisted them so often in the past. News of the war with Finland received scant publication in the press. Russia showed her appreciation by concluding a three-year commercial and navigation pact with Bulgaria on January 5, providing for greatly increased trade between the two countries. This treaty

Bulgarian Claims





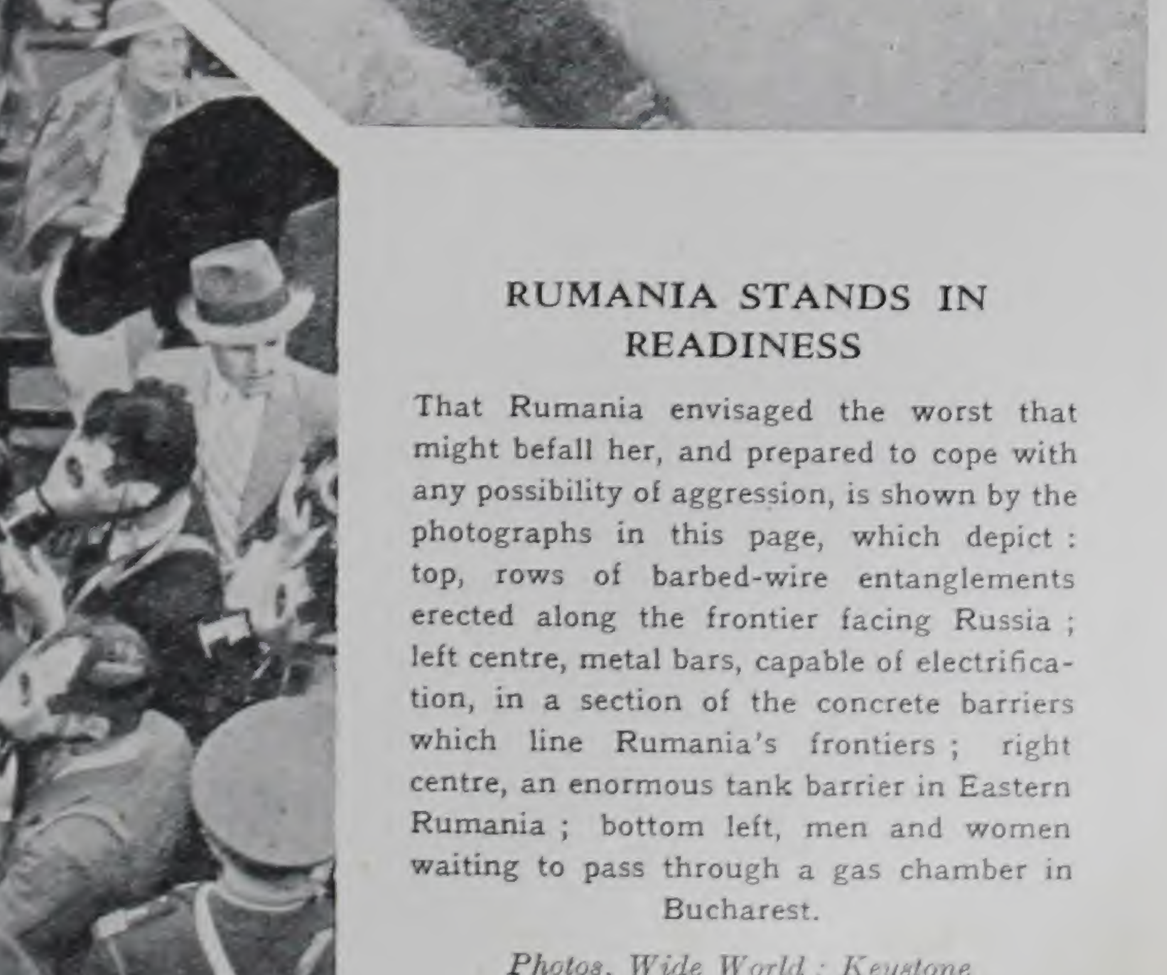
RUMANIAN CABINET CHANGES

M. Argetoianu (left), Rumanian premier, resigned on November 23, 1939, after holding office for only two months, as a result of Germany's exorbitant economic demands upon Rumania. He was succeeded in office by M. Tatarescu (right), a former premier.

Photos, Wide World: Keystone







RUMANIA STANDS IN READINESS

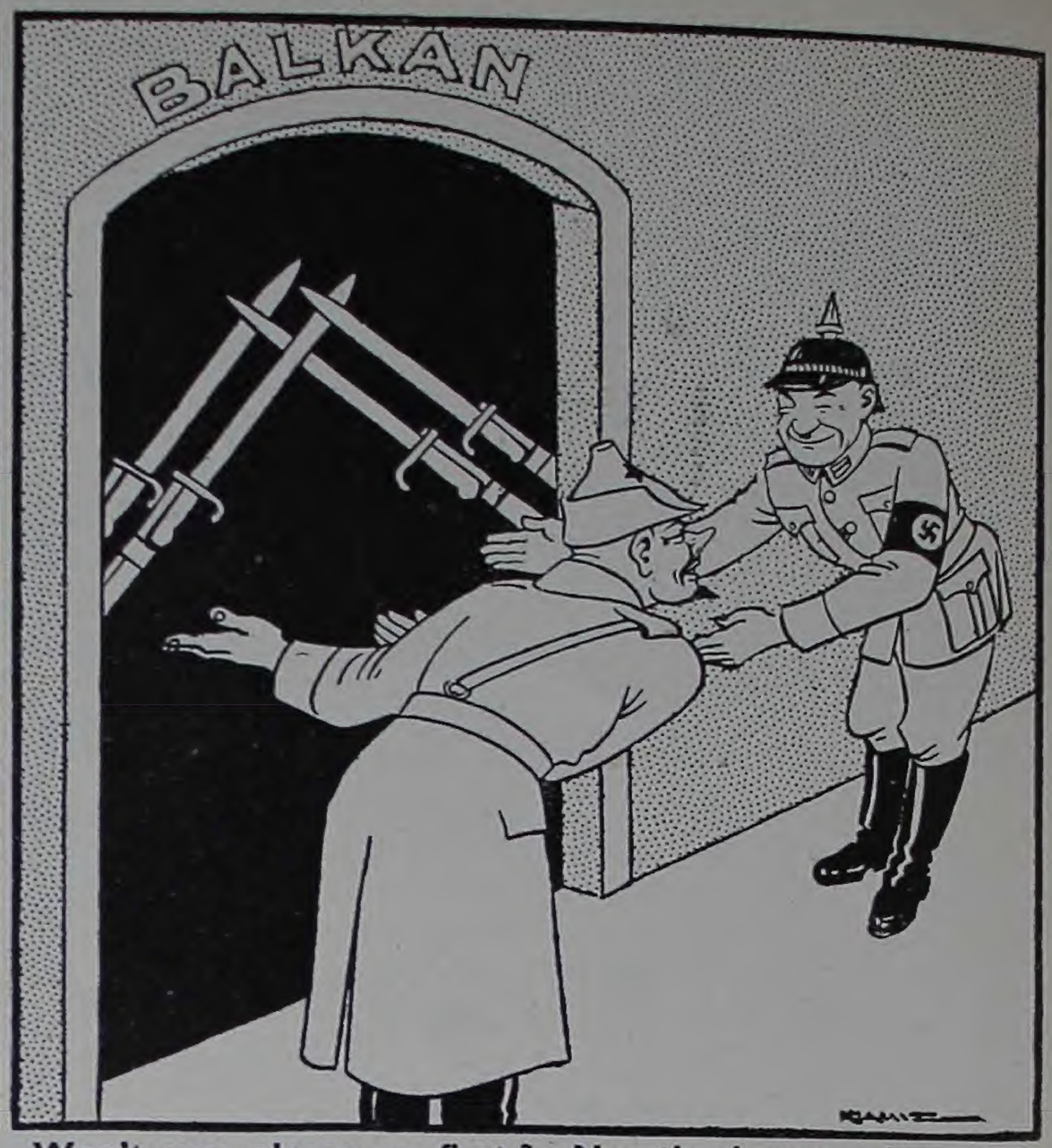
That Rumania envisaged the worst that might befall her, and prepared to cope with any possibility of aggression, is shown by the photographs in this page, which depict : top, rows of barbed-wire entanglements erected along the frontier facing Russia ; left centre, metal bars, capable of electrification, in a section of the concrete barriers which line Rumania's frontiers ; right centre, an enormous tank barrier in Eastern Rumania ; bottom left, men and women waiting to pass through a gas chamber in Bucharest.

Photos, Wide World ; Keystone



"What, me? No, I never touch goldfish"

By Illingworth: from the "Daily Mail," London



Won't you please go first? No, thank you, after you!

From "Karikatur," Ankara

also promised Bulgaria some relief from German economic domination.

Britain meanwhile concerned herself with efforts to bring Bulgaria into a Balkan *bloc*, and it was believed to be largely due to Britain's initiative that Turkish troops concentrated on Bulgaria's southern frontier in the early weeks of the war were withdrawn. In the placing of these troops Turkey had been acting up to her obligations to Yugoslavia, Greece and Rumania, with whom she was allied in the Balkan Entente and who might have been threatened by active Bulgarian revisionist operations. Britain's conciliatory efforts were crowned by the visit to Sofia of M. Menemencoglu,



From the "Evening Standard" London

Turkish Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Both countries exchanged assurances of their desire to respect each other's integrity, while a Bulgarian declaration that Bulgaria desired neutrality was interpreted to mean that she would not identify herself too much with Russian policy. But Russian propaganda against the Allies remained active, and the question whether Bulgaria would co-operate in a Balkan *bloc* was left unanswered for the time being.

Yugoslav Policy

Even more cautious than the policy of Rumania was that of Yugoslavia, a kingdom formed after the First Great War by the fusion of Slovenia, Croatia, Dalmatia and Bosnia (formerly parts of Austria-Hungary) with Serbia and Montenegro. The sympathies of most Yugoslavs were undoubtedly with the Allies, but the by no means satisfactory state of the country's defences and the existence of common frontiers with Germany and Italy called for great circumspection on the part of her statesmen. Especially after Italy had occupied Albania was Yugoslavia susceptible to Italian policy, and her fluctuating attitude towards the formation of a Balkan *bloc* varied with Italy's own attitude. Yugoslavia was also sensitive to Hungary's claims, the moderation of which in recent months she had owed to Italian influence on Hungary. The position of Yugoslavia was further complicated by internal differences between Croats and Serbs, by economic commitments to Germany, and by the presence of unruly elements in Macedonia and elsewhere whose passions could be worked on by interested Powers. Following frequent contacts with other Balkan diplomats M. Cincar-Markowitch, the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, in January defined his country's policy as follows :

" Yugoslavia has upheld the principle that she must maintain good relations with all Great Powers and must exclude all quarrels with neighbours which might lead to an international conflict . . . . Yugoslavia has no claims on foreign countries and has no vital interest in those questions which have caused war between the Great Powers. In this sense, Yugoslavia will support any attempts to remove reasons for conflict between the Danube and Balkan Powers, but the success of these attempts is dependent on many circumstances. Yugoslavia is determined to maintain strictly her neutral policy."

Yugoslavia's cautiousness led even to reluctance to agree to a meeting of the Balkan Entente Powers with whom she was allied, but this meeting was nevertheless fixed to be held in Belgrade on February 2, 1940.

Greece, like Yugoslavia, was intent on maintaining good relations with all her neighbours, but Britain's guarantee of her integrity and her long-standing friendship with Turkey guided her policy. Count Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, declared in his speech in December (mentioned earlier in this narrative) that the creation of a joint Italo-Greek frontier through Italy's conquest of Albania had served to clarify their general relations. Inspired Greek comment underlined the Italian Minister's friendly reference to Greece, and the withdrawal of Italian troops from the Albanian frontier was warmly appreciated. But suspicion of Italy's real intentions persisted throughout the Balkan countries. In Yugoslavia, for instance, Italian activity was thought to be responsible for unrest in Croatia and Slovenia.

Of all the Balkan countries, Turkey was the only one with a fixed and consistent policy. She maintained this in spite of a terrible earthquake which devastated her Anatolian provinces in December, 1939. Developments in Turkey following the conclusion of the Anglo-Turkish pact, her reactions to Russia's attacks on Finland, and German efforts to create difficulties between Turkey and Russia are the subject of a separate Chapter in this History.



BALKAN STATESMEN IN CONFERENCE

Above, Herr von Ribbentrop is seen in conversation with the then Bulgarian Prime Minister, M. Kiosseivanoff, on the occasion of the latter's official visit to Berlin in July, 1939. Below is a scene at the Little Entente Conference in February, 1940. In the front row, from left to right, are Dr. Markovich of Yugoslavia ; General Metaxas, Premier of Greece ; Dr. Sarajoglu, Turkish Foreign Minister ; and M. Gafencu, Rumanian Foreign Minister.

Photos, Wide World ; Keystone





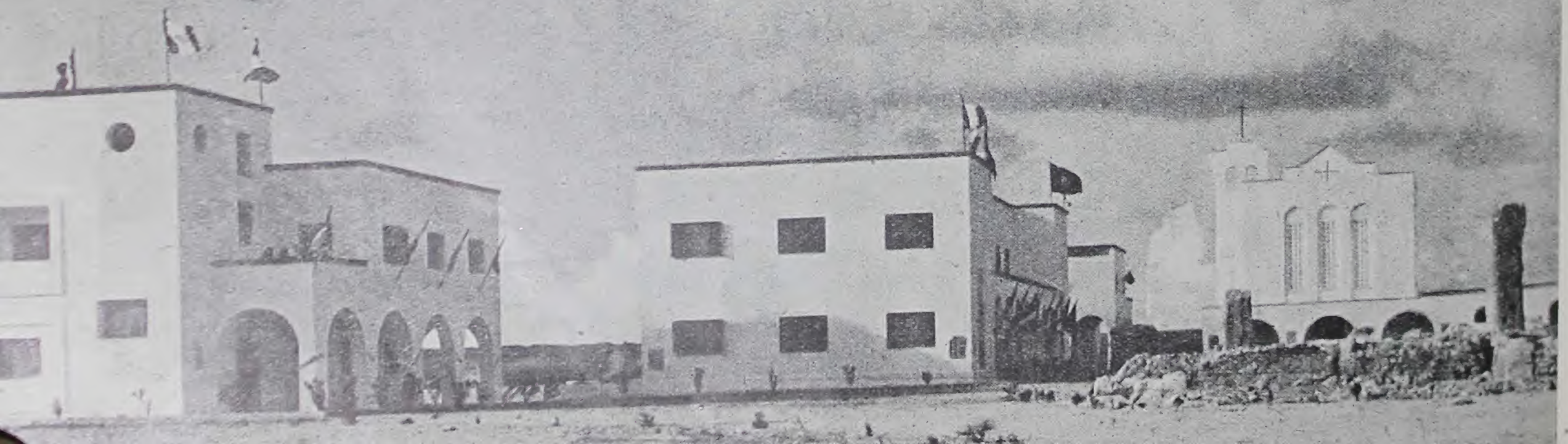




MASS COLONIZATION OF LIBYA

Libya was included in the national territory of Italy on October 26, 1938, and three days later colonization began with the sailing of 15 liners, carrying 20,000 emigrants, some of whom are seen above disembarking at Tripoli. Left, Marshal Balbo, Governor-General of the colony, is chatting with colonists before they embarked. Right, a typical Italian settler. Below, a newly built village in Libya, waiting to receive the colonists.

Photos, Keystone ; Wide World ; Associated Press



Chapter 55

ITALY'S POLICY AS A NON-BELLIGERENT: GUARDED AND NON-FRIENDLY NEUTRALITY

Italy's Declaration of Non-belligerency—Her Abortive Expansionist Designs—The Mediterranean Question—Preserving the Status Quo in the Balkans—Colonization of Libya: a Magnificent Experiment—Italy Needed Peaceful Years—'Shock' of the Nazi-Soviet Rapprochement—'No Longer Bound to any Foreign Power'

WHEN, on September 1, 1939, the Allies were on the point of declaring war upon Germany, Fascist Italy announced dramatically that she would "take no initiative in hostilities." As the war slowly gathered momentum, this policy was several times reaffirmed, both in the Italian press and in the terse, blunt speeches of Mussolini. Had the struggle been confined to the Allies and Germany, Italy's attitude of detachment—made possible, it would appear, by a secret clause in the Rome-Berlin military alliance—would probably have continued unaltered. But neither she nor the world at large had reckoned with Russia. In attacking Poland, and later Finland, Russia aroused the indignation of the civilized world.

While sharing this indignation to the full, Italy's reaction was not confined to the moral plane. She sensed a threat to her vital interests. Not for nothing had she poured her legionaries into Spain during the Civil War; the "menace of Communism," which Hitler had used merely as an electioneering phrase, was as real to her now as then. She did not hesitate to make her position clear. "If Communism should attempt to advance towards zones of vital interest to Europe and Italy," declared Signor Gayda, Italy's leading journalist, "Fascism will know how to reply." And on January 17 Signor Muti, newly elected secretary of the Fascist Party, stated that "Italy may at any moment find herself under the necessity of taking up arms."

What importance could be attached to these declarations of policy on the part of Italian statesmen and journalists?

Three Reasons

From the point of view of the Allies, Italy's attitude was vitally important for three reasons, which will be discussed in turn. Although Italy had fought with the Allies during the First Great War, she had always borne a grievance against her former comrades in arms. It is true that in 1915, the year of her entry into the war, she was promised certain territorial concessions by the Allies in return for her support, and that in 1919 she received much less than she was promised is also true. But the fault did not lie entirely with the Allies. Italy had been promised a large portion of the Turkish Empire, which was thought to be on the point of disintegration.

This disintegration certainly took place, but it came about in a way that no one had foreseen, and proved to be the liberation of the Turkish people, who had hitherto been smothered by the weight of their own possessions. Consequently, instead of a divided Turkey which could be neatly parcelled out, the Allies were confronted with a nation so resolutely united that the presence of the British fleet off Constantinople failed to overawe it. Disgruntled and

CIANO SURVEYS ITALIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Count Ciano, Italian Foreign Minister, speaking to the Chamber of Fascios and Corporations on December 16, 1939. He summarized the development of Italian foreign policy since 1933, and explained Italy's attitude of "non-belligerency," at the same time confirming that a clause in the Italo-German alliance absolved Italy from going to war for a considerable period of time.

Photo, Planet News

internally unsettled, Italy was obliged to renounce her hopes of increased colonial territory. But she did not forget the sacrifice that she had made. And when, after nearly twenty years, her attack upon Abyssinia roused the hostility of the members of the League, she was disposed more than ever to regard Britain and France, holders of the largest empires in the world, as the obstacles to her own imperial development. Hence, more grimly than cheerfully, she threw in her lot with Germany, the other great European power which considered herself humiliated. And thus there came into being that uneasy and unequal partnership, the Rome-Berlin Axis.

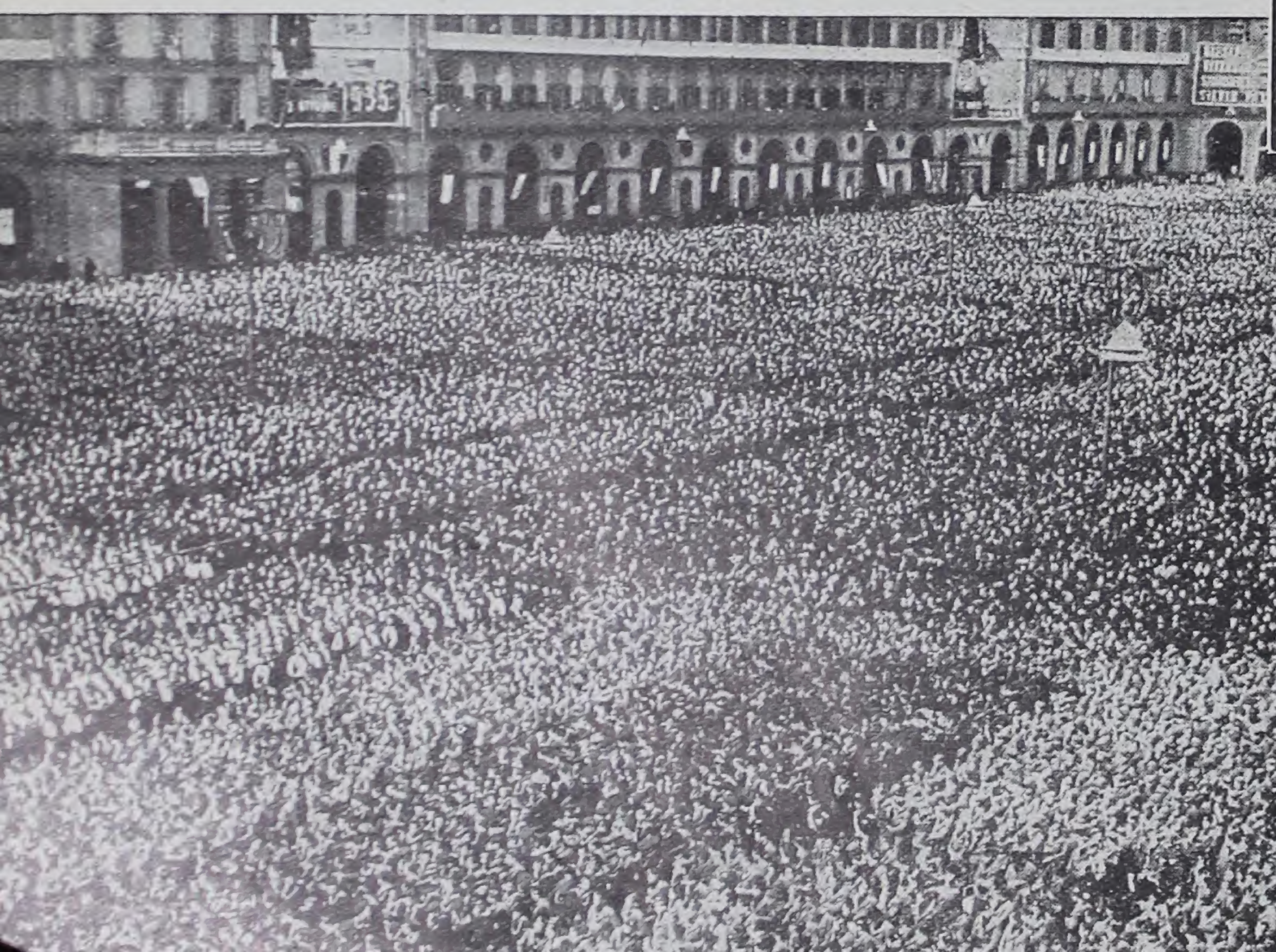
In spite of the conquest of Abyssinia and the seizure of Albania, Italy still regarded herself as a "have-not" nation. Her "aspirations" (for thus she termed her demands) could be summed up in three words: Tunisia, Jibuti, and Suez. During the early part of 1939 Italian agitation for Tunisia and Jibuti reached so strident a pitch that France, who had held these territories since the end of the 19th century, was obliged to take elaborate precautions. With a rapidity which must have surprised the Fascists, troops were dispatched to Jibuti, and a series of fortifications were constructed along the Libyan frontier on the model of the Maginot Line. Thereafter the agitation diminished in intensity, to be overshadowed towards the end of 1939 by events of much greater moment.

'Tunisia—Corsica—Jibuti—Nice!'

For the time being, therefore, Italy's expansionist designs were at a standstill. But Mussolini was always a statesman of the utmost shrewdness. He knew when to remain silent, and for how long at a time. And there was no doubt that he saw in this Second Great War a magnificent opportunity for his country. Little as Italy might wish to participate in the actual hostilities—and her people had had their fill of wars—she was not averse to participating in the Peace Conference. This time she would see that, so far as her own interests were concerned, justice was done. From the formation of the New Europe Italy, in Signor Gayda's words, "does not intend to be absent." And that was not all. "A new Europe can be built," he declared, "only when Italy's territorial claims are satisfied."

The second reason why Italy's attitude in the war was important from Great Britain's point of view was that both Great Britain and Italy were Mediterranean powers. It is true that Italy was accustomed to look upon the Mediterranean as "her sea," and that she frequently resented the proximity of foreign naval bases to her long and highly vulnerable coastline. But in spite of occasional expressions of annoyance in the popular press, she was well aware that in actual fact the Mediterranean was far from being the "indivisible heritage" she declared it to be; and upon this recognition was based the first law of her foreign policy, which was never to provoke unduly the hostility of Britain. From one point of view Italy's naval power in the Mediterranean was strong. In the east she possessed the Dodecanese Islands and Rhodes; in the south, the Libyan bases of Tobruk, Benghazi, and Tripoli; in the centre, the





ITALIAN DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST FRANCE

During the latter part of 1938 and beginning of 1939 violent anti-French demonstrations took place in Italy. On the right, outside the French Consulate in Milan, students brandishing placards claiming Tunisia, Corsica, Nice and Savoy for Italy. Below is the vast crowd in the Piazza Vittorio Veneto, Turin, listening to a speech by Mussolini on May 14, 1939—a speech punctuated by cat-calls against France and cries of "We want Tunisia!"

Photos, Wide World; Keystone





RIVAL FORCES IN NORTH AFRICA

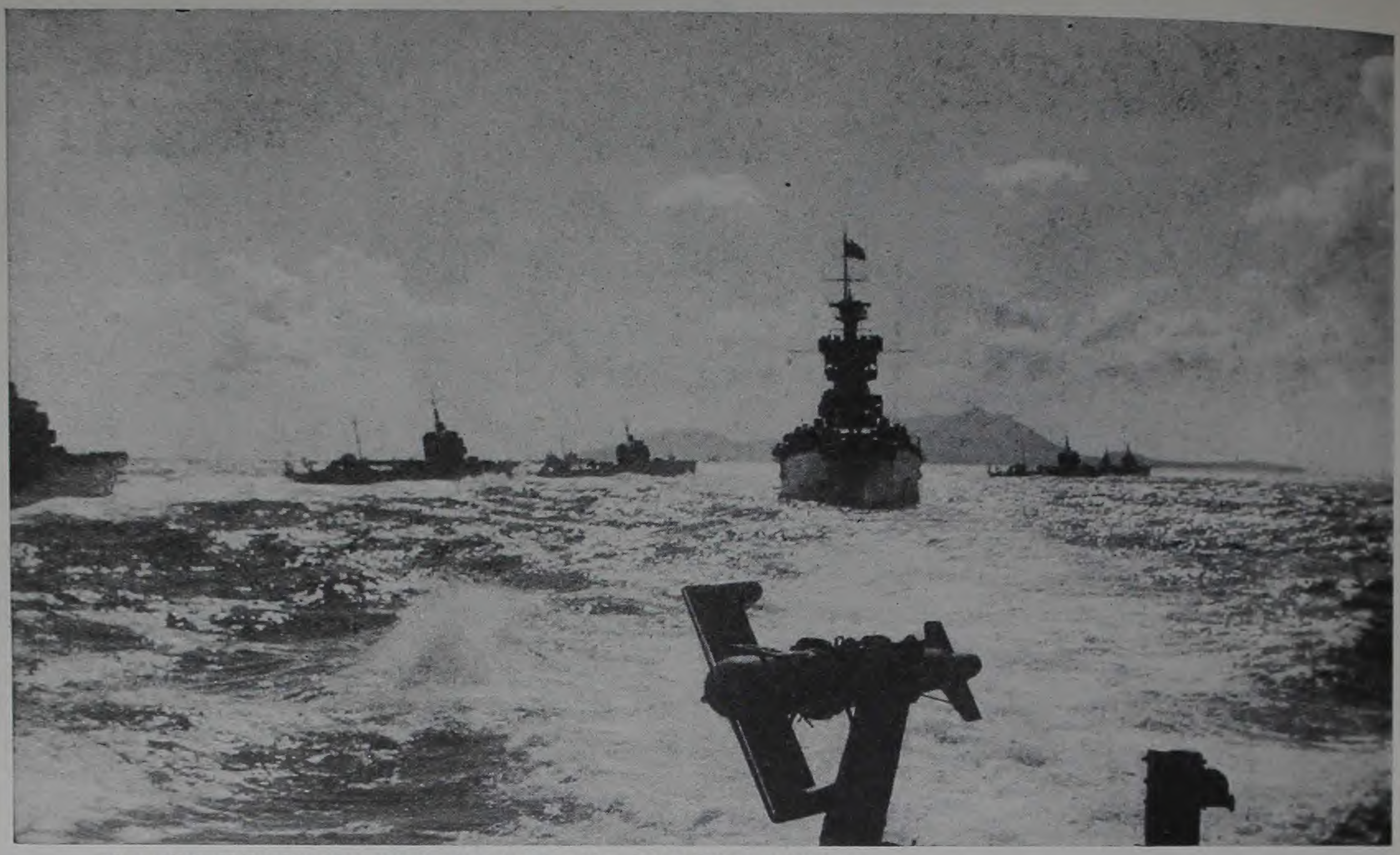
The upper photograph, showing French artillery moving past at a review on the edge of the Sahara, was taken during the visit of M. Daladier to Tunisia in January, 1939, as a reply to Italian agitation. In the lower picture, Italian lorries are seen approaching the saluting base at a military parade in Libya in honour of a visit by Field-Marshal Goering in April, 1939.

Photos, Keystone; Wide World

fortified island of Pantelleria; and in the west, the goodwill of the new Spain which she had helped to establish. In passing, we may note that the possession of Tunisia would have given her the great base of Bizerta, thus enabling her to control a "gate" across the middle of the Mediterranean.

But from another point of view Italy's position was not so powerful. Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, and Egypt, to say nothing of the bases in French North Africa, were formidable deterrents to a potential aggressor. And in consequence of the Anglo-Turkish Alliance Italy's power in the eastern Mediterranean had been rendered almost negligible; Turkey could be relied upon to look after the Dodecanese Islands. Nevertheless, Italy's strength was sufficient to give her considerable bargaining power; and it would not be wise to underestimate the effect of Italian submarines in a sea which is better adapted to submarine than to any other kind of warfare. That Italy intended to throw in her lot with the Allies straight away was unthinkable: she might never come into the war at all; but unless by some calamity the British Navy were sent to the bottom, or by a similar calamity Italy ceased to be governed by a statesman as shrewd as Mussolini, it was safe to say that Italy was not likely to be a party to a coalition against Britain.

Thirdly, Italy's interests in the Balkans (which are examined at length in another chapter) were intimately bound up with those of the Allies, who were as anxious as she was that aggression in that area, whether on the part of Russia or Germany, should be prevented. It was Italy's claim that, as a result of the conquest of Albania, she had become the "greatest Balkan power": a hint, perhaps, to Turkey, who had been president of the Balkan Entente (consisting of Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Rumania) since 1934. Italy's diplomatic aim, if not exactly to form a Balkan *bloc*, was so to compose the differences between the individual Balkan states as to render them capable of unification should any



ITALY'S STRATEGIC POSITION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The map below shows Italian spheres of influence in the Mediterranean. The Dodecanese Islands were occupied by Italy in 1912, during her war with Turkey over Tripoli. In 1920 she ceded the islands to Greece, but two years later repudiated the cession. The fortified island of Pantelleria occupies an important strategic position. Above, units of the Italian fleet are seen at sea during manoeuvres.

Photo, Wide World



one of them be threatened. Fascist hostility to Communism, it must be stressed, was a great deal more sincere than that professed by Italy's Axis partner and sponsor of the Anti-Comintern Pact. A country which for centuries had been the headquarters of the Catholic Church was not likely to welcome the spread of materialistic atheism in Europe; and, although the Fascist Party contained many anti-clerical members, it had never countenanced the ruthless persecution of religion for which the Nazis had made themselves infamous. But Communism was distrusted in Italy for other reasons than its incompatibility with Catholicism. Communism represented a complete break with tradition; Fascism, whatever its extravagances, was a return to tradition, the tradition of ancient Rome, upon which a great part of the European order is based. Consequently, Italy saw in Communism a menace to the civilization of Europe, of which, rightly or wrongly, she considered herself to be the guardian.

It would be a mis-statement as well as an understatement to say that Italy's attitude, which was perhaps best described as one of alert non-belligerence, depended solely upon the factors mentioned. Italy was not merely waiting to see "which way the cat would jump"; she was occupied with positive tasks of her own, tasks of which the full significance was not likely to become apparent for some time. In this respect the Fascist government had always differed from the Nazi government. It is safe to say that nothing undertaken by Nazi Germany since 1933 had been done without reference to her gigantic programme of rearmament; the Autobahnen, the Labour Camps, even the Strength Through Joy movement had each had a military significance. Italy on her part was no

pacifist nation. Indeed, Count Ciano, the Foreign Minister, pointed out in his review of Italian policy on December 14, 1939, that since 1911 his country had been for more years at war than at peace. And the Duce himself once described Italy as being in a state of "perpetual mobilization." But, unlike Germany, Italy had devoted her resources to other ends than those directly associated with war. Not merely had she reclaimed such plague-spots as the Pontine Marshes, building towns where once had been wilderness: she had undertaken what was at once the most gigantic and the most novel colonial experiment in history—the mass colonization of Libya. When, in the September of 1938, Marshal Balbo, Libya's energetic governor, led the first 20,000 colonists across the Mediterranean, Europe was in process of recovering from the first major war scare since 1914. Admittedly, the experiment did not pass unnoticed in the world's press; but it was treated as no more than an experiment, and an experiment which, in view of its costliness, was not likely to be repeated.

Amazing Experiment

Italy's declaration that, far from having completed her scheme, she intended to continue it for at least five years, was received in most quarters with polite scepticism. But when, true to schedule, a further consignment of 20,000 peasants was dispatched to Libya in September, 1939, the world, though convulsed anew with war, began to sit up and take notice. Here was a national undertaking which involved just that element of adventure and pride so often lacking in peacetime activities. Here were initiative, organization and determination devoted to other ends than those of mere destruction.

Nor was the experiment distinguished merely for its magnitude. Most remarkable of all were the preparations undertaken in the reception area before arrival of the colonists. Each village had been completed down to the smallest detail, so that, waking up on the morning after their arrival, the whole community went immediately to work. In a sense there was little of the "pioneer spirit" about this enterprise, for it was only the government that was the pioneer. And it must be admitted that rarely in modern times has a government seen its way to organizing a project so uncertain—many would said unsound—from an economic point of view. According to Count Ciano's exposition of Italian foreign policy, not



From the "Melbourne Argus"

DICTATORS IN A DILEMMA

Anti-Russian feeling ran even higher than usual in Italy during the Russo-Finnish war, and the photograph below shows Italian students demonstrating their sympathy for Finland outside the Finnish Legation in Rome. Under such conditions it was little wonder that the German-Soviet Pact did not make for smooth running of the Berlin-Rome Axis, and the fact that Italian supplies for Finland were held up by Germany is commented upon in witty manner in the cartoon above.

Photo, Wide World





PROMINENT PERSONALITIES IN ITALIAN POLITICS

Signor Virginio Gayda (left), editor of the "Giornale d'Italia," and a well-known author and journalist, acts as Mussolini's mouthpiece in the Italian controlled Press. Signor Ettore Muti (right) was elected Secretary to the Italian Fascist Party in succession to Signor Starace at the time of the Italian Cabinet reorganization on October 31, 1939.

Photos, Wide World; E.N.A.

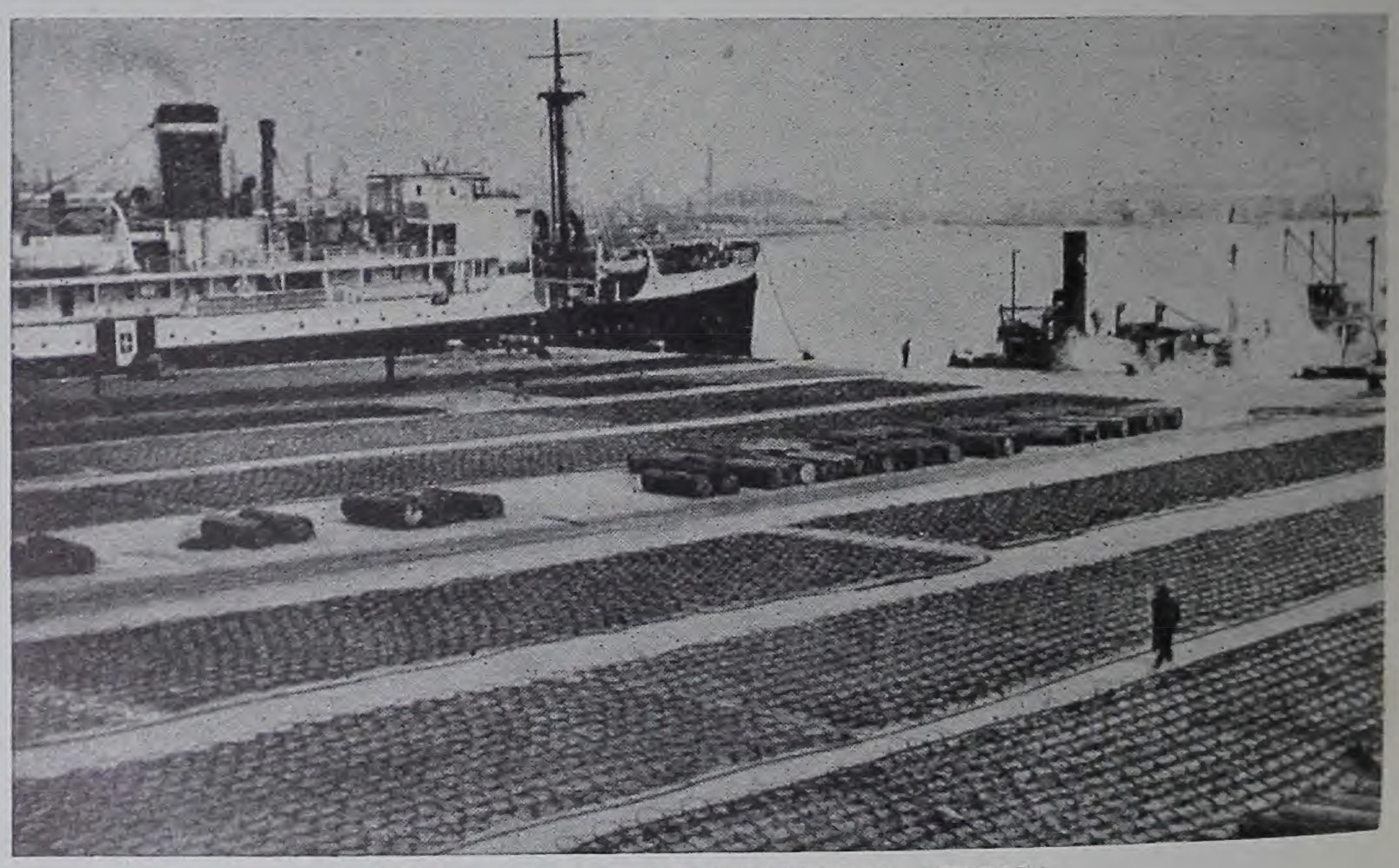
the least important reason for Italy's non-belligerent attitude was her incomplete military preparedness. But the Foreign Minister strenuously denied that Italy's decision to remain outside the conflict was dictated by this consideration alone. Nevertheless, he admitted that, "as a result of the great consumption of means caused by the fighting of two wars" (in Abyssinia and in Spain), Italy needed a period of time to recuperate. For this reason he informed Ribbentrop at their meeting at Milan in May, 1939, that, as regards joint military action, Italy was not prepared to take up arms for at least three years. He then quoted Ribbentrop as saying that the Reich was itself in need of further military preparation, which might occupy anything between four and five years. Was this deception, or did Ribbentrop really believe that, at the last moment, the Allies would fail in their pledge to Poland, and that a major war would thus be avoided? Ciano did not press the point, but he was careful to make it.

Need for a Rest

Referring to the "identity of opinion" of the German and Italian governments both as regards the situation then prevailing and as regards "plans for the future," Ciano was at pains to deny that the two countries "had a programme for disturbing the world's peace with threatening or aggressive proposals." But he also made it clear that Germany's *rapprochement* with Russia—which, in spite of the "complete accord" alleged to prevail between the Nazi and the Fascist governments, was made known to the latter barely fourteen hours before Ribbentrop started for Moscow—came as a complete shock to Italy, "given," to quote Ciano's words, "the fundamental position of hostility to Russia always maintained by Nazi Germany." It is perfectly clear, therefore, that, in spite of Hitler's frequent messages of goodwill to Mussolini, beginning with his telegram of thanks after the invasion of Austria, Germany intended to go her own way whatever the feelings of her partner. No protests against the Russian pact on Italy's part would have been effective at such short notice as she was given; and this short notice was a proof of the Reich's small regard for her opinion.

That the Italian government reacted to the Russian pact and later to the Russian invasion of Poland and Finland in the most unfavourable manner has already been shown; but it preferred under the circumstances to imply, rather than to assert, its displeasure. The government was silent. The press, though under strict government control, was more vocal, hinting unofficially what could not be uttered officially. Thus the "Tribuna" observed, in the course of an article on the international situation, that Italy "was no longer bound to any foreign power." Marshal Balbo's paper at Milan denounced Russia in terms similar to those used by Dr. Goebbels before his sudden "change of heart." And the "Avvenire" (January 29, 1940) expressed its scepticism at the German denial of the Vatican's broadcast disclosures of Nazi atrocities in Poland. Officially Italo-German relations remained unchanged; but that there was an undercurrent was proved by the sending of war material from Italy to Finland, which resulted in the holding up of that material by Germany in order to placate her new ally Russia, and eventually in its release later in order not to offend her old ally Italy.

To imagine that Italy's suspicion of Russia (and therefore distrust of



NETS TO CATCH LETHAL 'FISH'

On this Italian quayside are seen some of the steel nets which are used to guard the entrances of Italian ports against the entry of hostile submarines. Those shown in the photograph have been taken up for overhaul and repair.

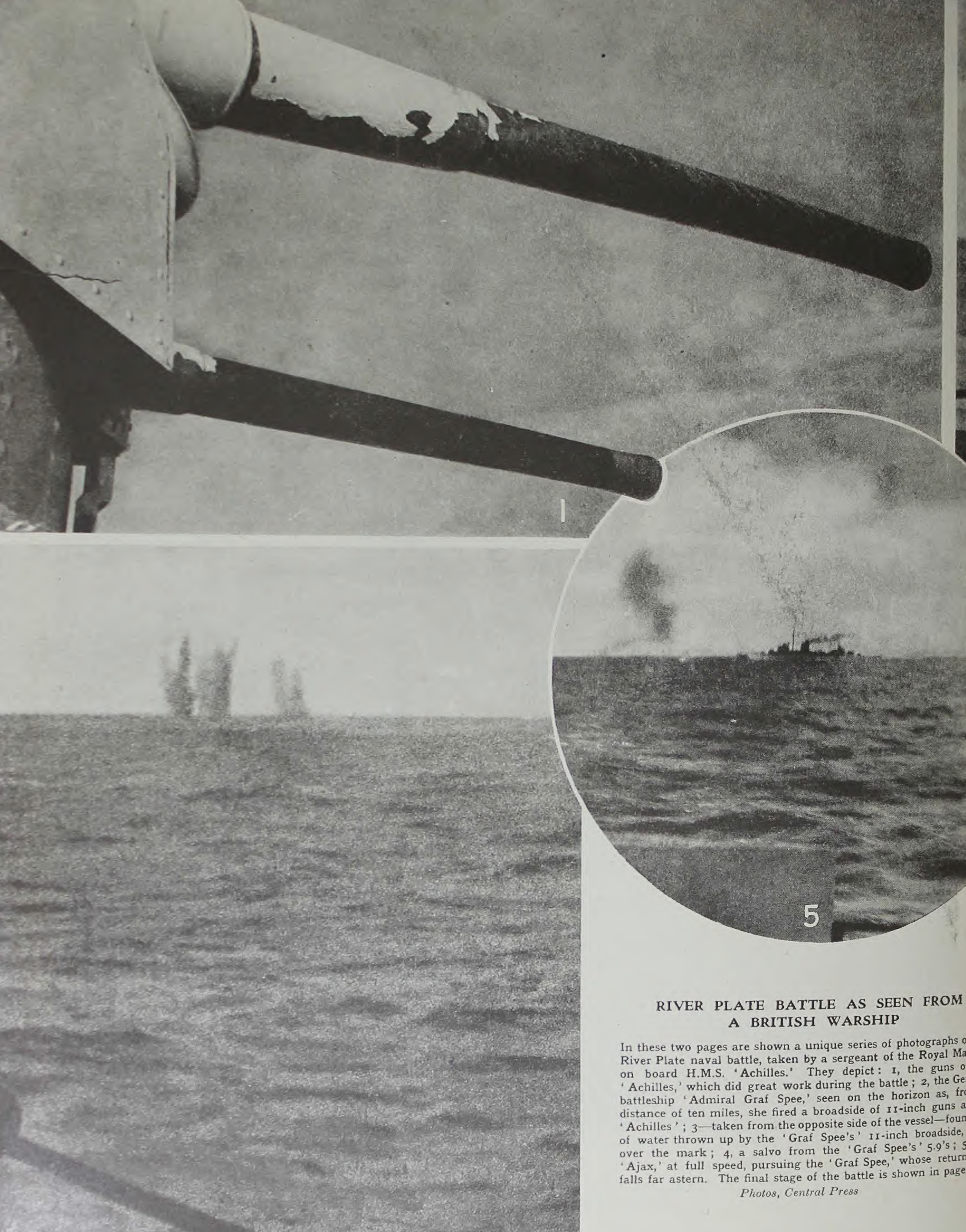
Photo, Wide World



AXIS POWERS SIGN MILITARY PACT

The military alliance between Germany and Italy was embodied in a Treaty signed in Berlin on May 22, 1939, by Count Ciano and Herr von Ribbentrop, who are seen above shaking hands after the signing of the pact. Signor Ciano revealed, on December 16, that "Italy had let it be known that a minimum period of three years was necessary to bring the preparations of her war equipment up to the desired maximum level."

Photo, Keystone



RIVER PLATE BATTLE AS SEEN FROM A BRITISH WARSHIP

In these two pages are shown a unique series of photographs of River Plate naval battle, taken by a sergeant of the Royal Ma on board H.M.S. 'Achilles.' They depict: 1, the guns of 'Achilles,' which did great work during the battle; 2, the Ger battleship 'Admiral Graf Spee,' seen on the horizon as, fro distance of ten miles, she fired a broadside of 11-inch guns at 'Achilles'; 3—taken from the opposite side of the vessel—fount of water thrown up by the 'Graf Spee's' 11-inch broadside, over the mark; 4, a salvo from the 'Graf Spee's' 5.9's; 5, 'Ajax,' at full speed, pursuing the 'Graf Spee,' whose return falls far astern. The final stage of the battle is shown in page

Photos, Central Press

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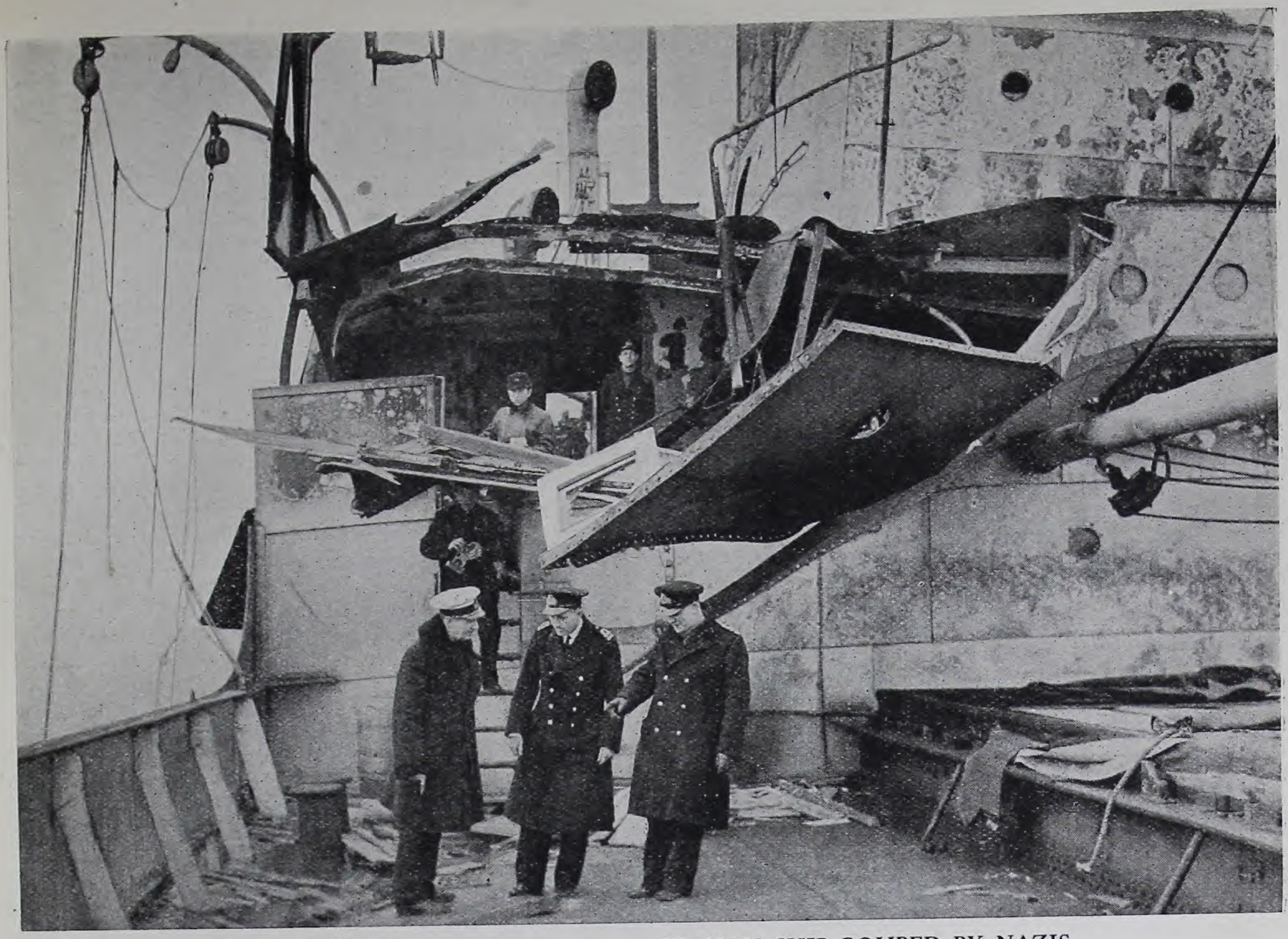
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SAFELY O'ER THE FOAMING MAIN

Photo, Wide World

The first contingent of Canadian troops arrived in England on December 17, 1939, after a safe crossing of the Atlantic under the protection of the Royal Navy. Some of the men are seen above, gathered at the rail of their ship, watching with interest the other vessels of the convoy. After their arrival in England they went into training preparatory to being sent on active service with the British Expeditionary Force. A second contingent landed safely in Britain on January 1, 1940.



ITALIAN SHIP BOMBED BY NAZIS

Even Germany's Axis partner was not spared the promiscuous bombing carried out by Nazi aircraft on merchant shipping, and above the master of the Italian ship 'Amelia Lauro' is showing two British naval officers the damage done when his ship was bombed by a German 'plane in the North Sea. One of the ship's crew was killed and three were injured.

Photo, Planet News

the Pact with Germany) implied any weakening of the Axis would have been to indulge in the most dangerous wishful thinking.

It was indeed true that the Fascist party contained many admirers of England: Count Grandi, late Ambassador in London; Balbo, restless and vigorous governor of Libya; even perhaps the Duce himself.

On the other hand, there were Fascist extremists to whom the British Empire and the French Republic were nothing but bloated, Jew-ridden plutocracies, engaged in a ruthless and unprovoked war of extermination against a martyred Germany. There were violent newspapers, such as the "Regima Fascista," which did not hesitate to repeat the most shameful of Nazi lies, such as that German prisoners were systematically tortured in British concentration camps. And there were other prominent officials (among whom might have been counted Farinacci, Starace, and possibly Ciano himself) who, if not quite so uncritical in their hatred, feared that another victory for the Allies would automatically mean another Versailles and therefore another humiliation for Italy.

Anti-British Italians

That such suspicions were entirely without foundation it was the task of British propaganda unremittingly to drive home. There was the basis of long standing friendship between Italy and England which needed to be strengthened.

Whichever policy the Duce might see fit to adopt—whether he should eventually throw in his lot with the Allies, whether he should prefer to assist them indirectly by sending arms and men to Finland or the Balkans, or whether, finally, he should endeavour to maintain an attitude of splendid isolation—it could not be supposed for a moment that he would renounce, except as a temporary expedient, the "claims" to which he had so often given voice. That he would renounce the methods which he had hitherto employed in advertising these claims—methods which he had copied somewhat slavishly from the Nazis—was most probable. And no doubt those demands which were based upon reason and justice would thereby have greater chance of satisfaction. The Duce's dream was a revival in all its splendour and power of the Roman Empire in Africa: the absorption of Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, the Sudan, and Abyssinia, into one mighty territory, wherein Italian colonists could be settled in their thousands, and the new culture of Fascism could be superimposed upon foundations laid by Imperial Rome. That the New Rome could not be built in a day he was only too well aware; but, to quote his own words, "Fascism can afford to wait."

That was the chief difference between Fascism and Nazism: Nazism could not afford to wait; its patience was continually being exhausted. But Fascism waited with unceasing vigilance for a chance to further its plans of empire. Mussolini, with all his good work for Italy to his credit, could not be acquitted of grandiose personal ambitions and a somewhat Machiavellian capacity for time-serving opportunism.

Chapter 56

THE EMPIRE MUSTERS ITS FORCES TO THE AID OF THE MOTHERLAND

'His Majesty's Dominions'—Freedom and Safety Within the British Commonwealth—The Empire Conference in London—Utilizing the Man-power of the Colonial Empire—The Empire Air Training Scheme—India and the Defence of the Empire—The Second Australian Imperial Force—Canadian and New Zealand Air Force Contingents—The Dominion Navies

THE way in which the peoples of the British Empire ranged themselves with the Mother Country at the outbreak of war, as described in Chapter 20, provided one of the most inspiring themes of the first phase of the conflict, and the importance of the theme may be said to have been increased as the weeks went by.

The war became more complicated and unforeseen in its developments, throwing the chief strain upon national morale. As the "blitzkrieg" strategy employed by Germany like a bully against her smaller neighbours failed to materialize against her strongly allied opponents in the West, it gradually became apparent that possibly Germany was playing for time, while still hoping to produce political complications in her favour by means of propaganda. The only material advantage that it seemed possible for her to gain by delaying the real trial of strength was in some elaborate development of her alliance with Soviet Russia. The Nazis may have been hoping for much larger Russian supplies to counteract eventually the effects of the Allied blockade. The preponderance of expert opinion outside Germany pointed out that Russia was not a great exporting country, and that her transport was almost as inefficient as in the old Tsarist days. When a political attack on Finland by Soviet Russia was followed by a military onslaught, evidently with German connivance, the far-reaching extent of the agreement between the two Totalitarian governments was reluctantly realized, and the prospect of German infiltration and expert control of Russian industry and transport began to seem less unlikely.

Still a War of Nerves

The Allied experts were reduced to prophesying a long delay for the fulfilment of German hopes, so that Germany's prospects of winning the war could not be improved by her eastern alliance. But in so far as such hopes explained the Nazis' postponement of any large-scale action, the strategic situation as it developed during the rest of 1939 became more clearly dependent upon the ultimate effective resources of the belligerents, and, of course, upon the quality of their morale.

In such a perspective, and with a lengthened retrospect, ought we to view the British Empire, which was so rashly challenged by the Nazi Government. It was the ideal antagonist of Totalitarian tyranny and pan-German militarism. It can be seen in our longer retrospect as a slow and almost a natural growth, developing gradually from the old type of military empire into a presage of the new world order for which the Allies had called a halt to ruthless violence in international affairs.

In the last century the British Empire began to reflect the changes in the political organization of mankind that were being brought about by scientific inventions, enormously increased power over natural resources, and the re-application of ancient conceptions of popular government. Only slowly did any realization of the potentiality of this Empire dawn upon its citizens. The extent of its territories first of all struck the imagination of commentators. The phrase "His Majesty's dominions, on which the sun never sets" is over a century old. It was written by John Wilson ("Christopher North"), the Scottish essayist, in 1829, and thereafter was often echoed by politicians and writers. Tennyson gave the idea fresh currency,

Worldwide Power

ALLIED REPRESENTATIVES VISIT FRANCE

This group was taken in Paris during a visit of Dominion and Indian representatives to France. It shows, left to right: Mr. P. Fraser, Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand; Mr. Anthony Eden; General Gamelin; Mr. T. Crerar, Canadian Minister of Mines; Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council; Mr. R. G. Casey, Australian Minister of Supply; Colonel Deneys Reitz, South Africa's Minister for Native Affairs.

British Official Photograph · Crown Copyright



while stressing the continued territorial acquisitions of Britain, in his Jubilee Ode to Queen Victoria, linking them with modern conceptions of commerce and the interchange of ideas :

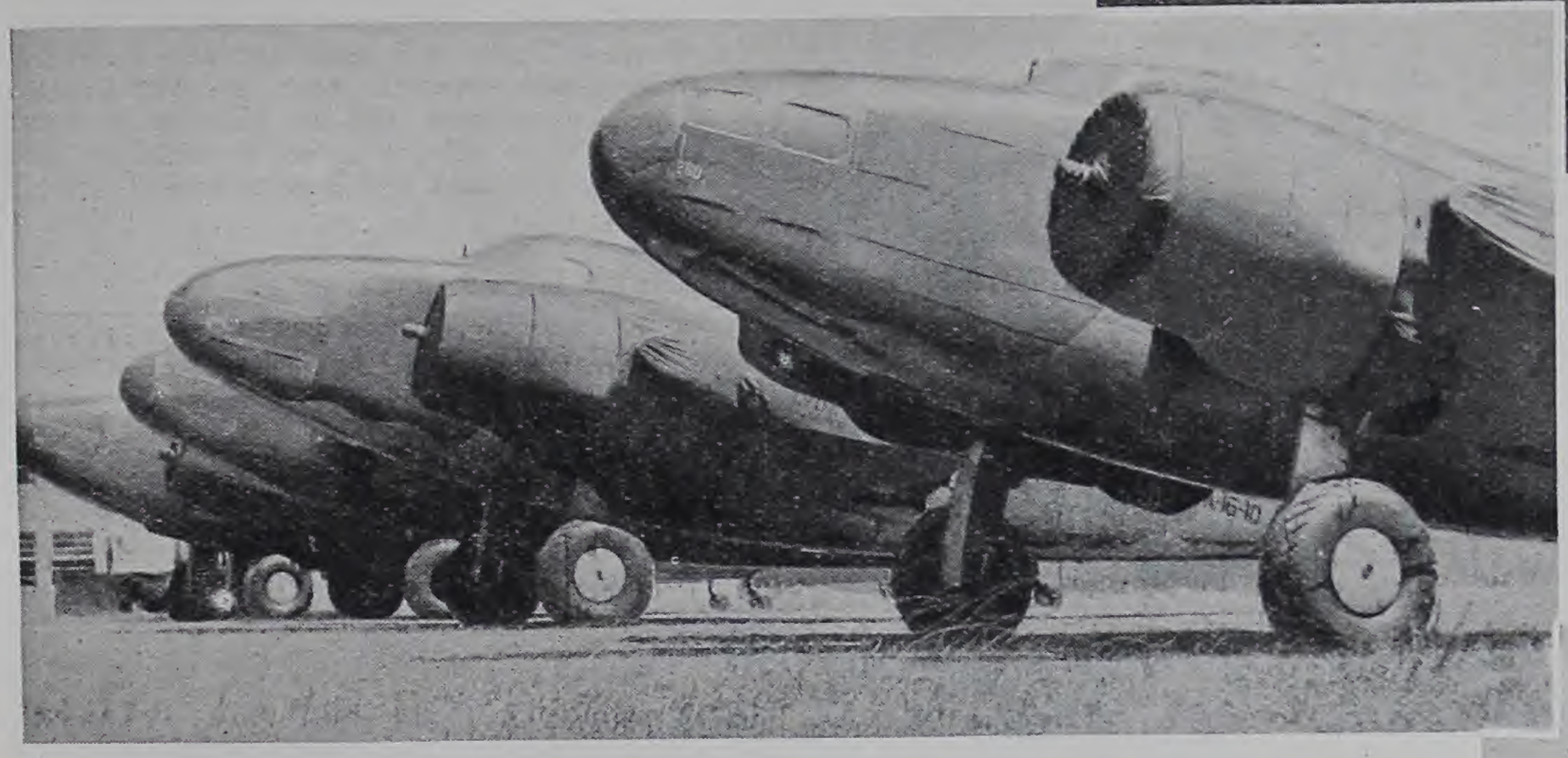
> Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce!
> Fifty years of every-brightening Science!
> Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

Could he have looked forward another fifty years, the poet might have been glad to reserve his exclamation marks for yet more notable advances. But a somewhat Jingo phase set in towards the end of the last century, concurrently with growing envy on the part of belated European rivals of Britain, of whom Germany was soon to become the most dangerous. A hint of that phase survives in Benson's well-known " Land of Hope and Glory " :

> Wider still and wider, shall thy bounds be set.

Although the bounds of the Empire indeed continued to be extended, mainly as a consequence of Germany's





AUSTRALIA'S AIRMEN IN TRAINING

Below, a pilot officer is giving instructions to a cadet before taking him up for 'dual' training. Left, a line-up of Lockheed-Hudson bombers ready for assembly at Richmond Aerodrome. Above, Australian airmen in Britain studying a map while mechanics prepare a Sunderland flying-boat.

G.P.U.; Associated Press; Topical



defeat in the first Great War, that aspiration for territorial acquisition had been submerged by the more important considerations suggested by the Empire's variety and wealth. The open secret, unbelievable to militarist Powers, of the Empire's voluntary cooperation, was summarized in a speech broadcast on October 25, 1939, by Col. Deneys Reitz, the first of the Empire representatives who arrived in London in the autumn for the Imperial Conference. He was explaining the peculiar position of South Africa and her apparently divided attitude when war broke out :

> " In Great Britain, in Australia and in New Zealand you have homogeneous British communities, speaking the same language and held together by the same historical traditions; whereas in South Africa the majority of our European population is of Dutch descent, speaking the Dutch or Afrikaans language. You must remember that in the past we fought two bitter wars against the British. I myself served for three years under arms against the British Empire, and I went into exile in a strange land rather than live under the British flag. But Great Britain, after defeating us in war, treated us with a generosity unknown in history and conferred on us an even greater measure of liberty than we had enjoyed under our own former Republics. Today, as a voluntary partner in the British Commonwealth, we are not only free, but far safer than we could hope to be if we were on our own with the smash-and-grab policy which is now trying to dominate the world. It would be premature for me to indicate what our military contribution to the war is going to be, but we have undertaken to protect with all our resources the land defences of the British naval base at Simonstown. Already we have interned all Nazi agitators who were making trouble."

At the end of October that was the attitude of most people in South Africa, which Germany regarded as the Empire's weak link and a probable neutral in war. A still more striking object lesson to Germany, and the rest of the world, of the meaning of the Imperial Commonwealth was the great Empire Conference.

With remarkable speed, considering the nature of the difficulties involved, the representatives of India and the Dominions had assembled in London and begun their discussions as November opened. It was less than a month before that Mr. Eden had announced in the House of Commons the decision to hold the conference. The appearance of



CANADIAN PERSONALITIES

Above, Air Vice-Marshal G. M. Croil, Chief of the Canadian Air Staff (left), is seen with the late Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor-General of Canada, at a review of aviation units in Ottawa.

Photo, Keystone

a representative of India—he was Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan—among the Dominion delegates served as a token of the official attitude to Dominion status for India as merely a deferred and not a repudiated aim of the British Government. South Africa was represented by the experienced Col. Deneys Reitz, Minister for Native Affairs, and one of the simpler questions he brought with him was the best disposal of the Union's gift of £1,000,000 worth of South Africa's food supplies. The other leading delegates were Mr. T. Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources, Canada; Mr. R. G. Casey, Minister of Supply, from Australia, and Mr. Peter Fraser, Deputy Prime Minister for the invalid Mr. Savage, from New Zealand.

The symbolic interest of this assembly of Empire representatives—and there had not been so many of them in London since the Coronation of the King two years before—was emphasized by the creation of a new precedent in the "Mother of Parliaments." When Mr. Chamberlain addressed the House on November 2, to make his weekly report upon the progress of the war, the Dominion Ministers were allowed to sit with the M.P.s in four seats reserved for them next to the Dominions Gallery.

In apt and well-chosen words Mr. Chamberlain on that occasion stressed the value of the Conference, both symbolic and practical, to the well-being of the Empire:

"We have had in the last few days a striking demonstration of the united determination of the Empire.

"From Canada, from the Commonwealth of Australia, from New Zealand, from the Union of South Africa and from India have come Cabinet Ministers and representatives who have travelled thousands of miles in order to make personal contact with Ministers in this country and to see with their own eyes the gigantic efforts in which we are engaged.

"Discussions with these representatives have already begun, and we are considering with them how best to co-ordinate the contribution which each of us can make to our common task.

"As honourable members are aware, the Empire has already shown how generous and whole-hearted is its spirit of cooperation. The fuller knowledge which we shall now gain of the plans of the different Governments as a result of the presence of their Ministerial representatives here will be of great value to us. And in their turn we are confident that the Dominion Governments and the Government of India will find that the first-hand impressions of their representatives will afford them invaluable aid in gaining a fuller appreciation of our common problems, and of the best and quickest means of solving them.

INDIAN TROOPS ARRIVE IN FRANCE

The arrival of the first Indian soldiers in France for service on the Western Front was announced on December 27, 1939. Below, members of the Royal Indian Army Service Corps are seen watering their mules at canvas drinking troughs in a wood.

British Official Photograph: Crown Copyright







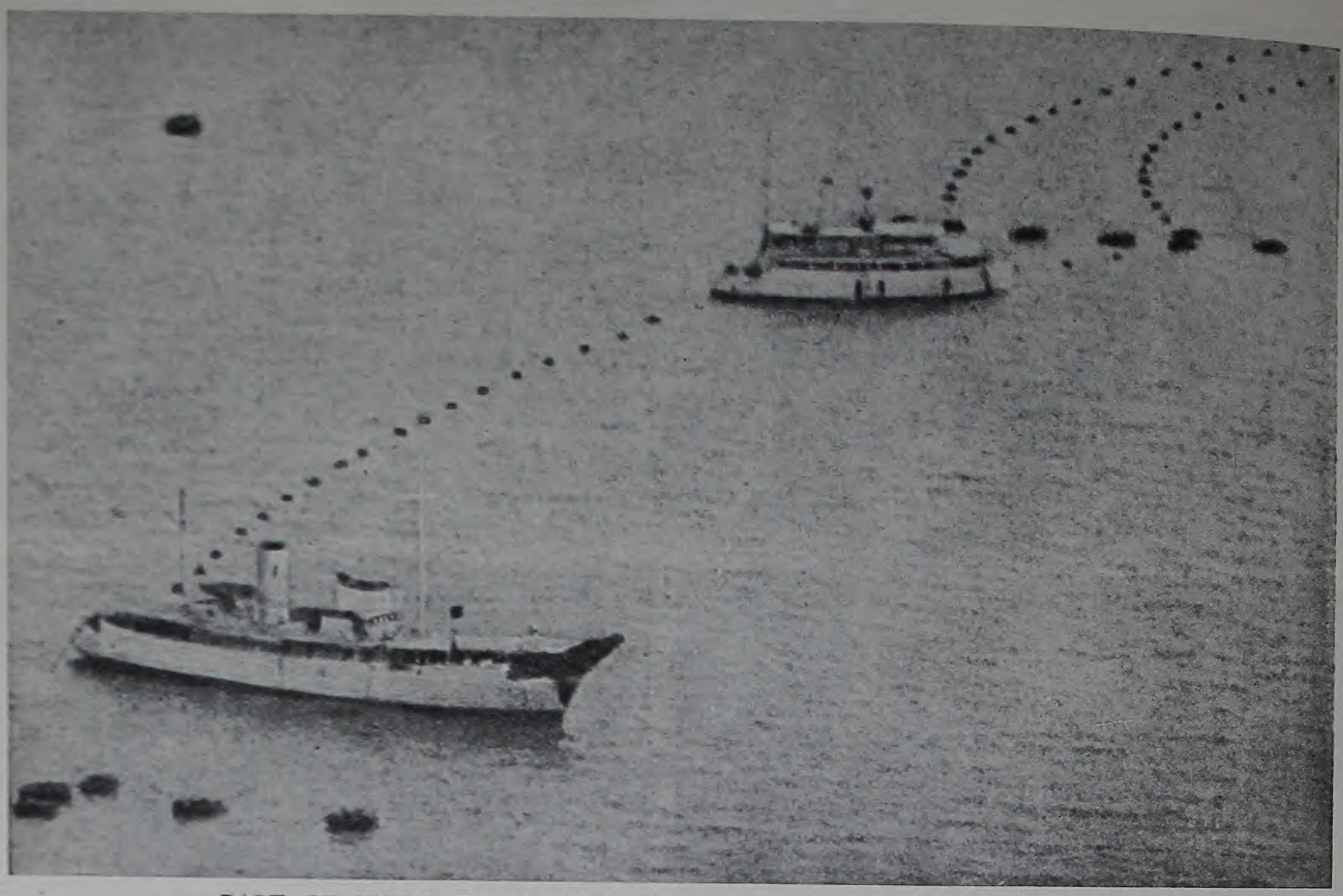




THE RALLY OF THE COLONIES

Photographs in this page show : top left, Cyprus R.A.S.C. recruits being drilled by an English N.C.O. ; top right, an African soldier of the Royal West African Frontier Force ; above, an A.R.P. gong at Freetown, Sierra Leone ; right, members of the Straits Settlements R.N.V.R. in training ; below, at Nukualofa, in the Pacific Island of Tonga (Friendly Islands), a British Protectorate, the Queen of Tonga inspects her troops.

Photos, P.N.A. ; Central Press ; Fox



PART OF HONG KONG'S DEFENCES

A comprehensive programme for the defence of Hong Kong was drawn up long before war broke out, and the fortifications were brought up to date. The photograph above shows the submarine boom placed across the entrance of the harbour.

Photo, British Movietone Newsreel

"Equally striking is the whole-hearted cooperation that we are receiving from all parts of the Empire, including Burma, and from the Colonies."

The Premier then added a special tribute to the Colonial Empire, in the course of which he gave some indications of future policy:

"I have expressed before, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, our great appreciation of the spontaneous messages of support which came immediately after the outbreak of war from every single territory of the Colonial Empire. We did not ask for these messages; the Colonies have not been forced into war by Great Britain against their will. The action of so many peoples of various races is a witness to their consciousness that a threat to Great Britain is equally a threat to that freedom and well-being which has been assured to them under British rule.

"Although at the beginning the war effort of the Colonies will be mainly on the economic side, and every Colonial Government is doing its utmost to help us in the organization of supplies of essential raw material and foodstuffs, I should like to refer with gratitude to the numerous offers of personal service from residents in the Colonies.

"It is the intention of His Majesty's Government to employ the man-power of the Colonial Empire as may be most effective, and plans for doing this are being worked out.

"In many cases openings are already being provided in locally raised units. For example, in Africa the strength of the Royal West African Frontier Force has been more than doubled and that of the King's African Rifles in East Africa more than trebled; and, in fact, the voluntary offers of service throughout the Empire have far exceeded our immediate requirements.

"As announced some time ago, British subjects from the Colonies and British protected persons who are in this country, including those who are not of pure European descent, are now placed for entry into the armed forces on the same footing as British subjects from the United Kingdom.

"Such is the nature of the help we are receiving from the Empire. Eagerly offered and gladly accepted, it is a splendid example of free cooperation and ungrudging self-sacrifice in a noble cause throughout the lands which owe allegiance to the King."

Another effective demonstration of Imperial unity arose out of the Conference. This was a visit made by the Empire representatives to the B.E.F. war zone in France between November 10 and 13. They toured the B.E.F. lines, talked with officers and men, and were shown the liaison system between the French and British armies. They interviewed M. Daladier and General Gamelin, and were able to talk informally with the British C.-in-C., Viscount Gort, when they dined with him at the British Headquarters on the conclusion of their tour. The political importance of the visit was underlined by the fact that Mr. Anthony Eden accompanied the Empire delegates. Back in London, their conference, although little heard of by the public, was resumed, and it did much to prevent misunderstandings and make cooperation more effective. A good example of the frank exchange of information and suggestions was the revision of the Empire Air Scheme, whereby Canada had been allotted the role of central training and aircraft building pool for the Empire. The changes by no means reduced the scope of the scheme, but promised in the long run to extend it, while at the same time avoiding friction.

Training the R.A.A.F.

The chief change was in Australia's new plan, to train the majority of the Australian personnel of the Empire Air Force in Australia, instead of sending them to Canada. The revised scheme, as announced by Mr. Menzies, the Prime Minister, in December, was an impressive one for a country with a total population of less than seven millions. The plan was to contribute to the Empire Air Forces 26,000 trained man—10,400 pilots and 15,600 observers, wireless operators and gunners—and to train the great majority of them in Australia, within three years. This involved

borrowing many instructors from Great Britain. Great Britain had agreed to find also a big proportion of engines and 'planes required, but it meant a rapid development of Australia's aircraft and allied industries to meet her future requirements, although she had already placed orders with the American aircraft industry. Thirty-four new training schools had to be established as quickly as possible, and in spite of other heavy charges to be met by Great Britain, the cost to Australia over three years of the whole scheme was estimated at £50,000,000. When the scope of Australia's other preparations—especially the military—is taken into account, Mr. Menzies' description can be seen as the bare truth. He said :

"This scheme will play a decisive part in the war. It affords a remarkable example of the unity and strength of Great Britain and the Dominions, working together to obtain supremacy in the air. The original scheme was changed because it is impossible to overcome exchange difficulties, and also because the training of most of the men in Australia will contribute greatly to Australian security and our capacity to play our part in the Empire's war effort generally."

Australian personnel, sent over to man a previously ordered squadron of Short Sunderland flying-boats, had meanwhile begun intensive training in England. In the New Year Australia became the first Dominion to have a complete unit of its own air force serving in Europe, when this squadron of four-engined machines, with a range of 2,800 miles and maximum speed of 210 m.p.h., was attached to the Coastal Command of Britain. But in Canada preparations were proceeding on a large scale. Besides the New Zealand and Australian trainees who had already arrived, about 7,000 applications for recruitment to the Royal Canadian Air Force had been received in Canada—many of them from Americans—before the end of the year.

The Empire Air Training Scheme was eventually completed and signed in Ottawa on December 17, and a month later Air Vice-Marshal G. M. Croil, Chief of the Canadian Air Staff, was appointed head. Among the interesting terms of the scheme as published was a provision that squadrons manned by personnel from the Dominions would be identified by name with their own Dominion when moved to any theatre of war. New Zealand as well as Australia would undertake training of its own personnel besides sending men to Canada. The Canadian Government undertook to administer the joint training programme, which appeared to be getting behind scheduled dates.

South Africa had kept to its initial decision to train personnel only within South Africa. This had been based upon a policy of mainly passive assistance through home defence. For several months General Smuts had to face a strange combination of political opponents, represented by Dr. Malan, the extremist Nationalist Republican leader, and the irreconcilable General Hertzog, but his policy of support for Britain's war against Germany proved gradually to have the main backing of the country. Great enthusiasm was expressed when two bombers of South Africa's Coastal Command were responsible on December 2 for intercepting a German liner, the "Watussi," south of Cape Point. The liner scuttled herself (*see* illustration in page 431), but the general feeling was to congratulate the Air Force on having had a chance of active participation in the war. The land defence forces were designed for service at home, but General Smuts

Split in South Africa

THEY SWEPT FOR MINES AT THE CAPE

Even faraway South Africa did not deem herself immune from German mines that might be laid by disguised and stealthy commerce raiders or by aircraft, and thus South African seamen swept the seas off the Union Coast every day. Below, a veteran member of the Cape Mine-sweeping Flotilla of the Seaward Defence Force is keeping an eye on the sweep wire off Cape Town.

Photo, Sport & General



had ample support for his decision, announced in January, that a purely volunteer contingent for service overseas would be allowed and even encouraged by the Government.

While events in Europe continued to indicate no urgent need of more military forces, the Empire's contingents were steadily preparing none the less, and provided perhaps a more immediately telling proof of the Empire's striking power than the unique Air Scheme. In India, in spite of continued controversy as between Congress, the Government, and the pro-Government Parties, essential unity of feeling among all classes was behind India's part in the defence of the Empire. Besides the garrison duties undertaken by Indian contingents from the start of the war at many vital posts, as far as Singapore and Hong Kong, Indian mule transport sections were serving in France before the end of the year. A statement issued on January 11, 1940, by Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan asserted India's willingness and ability to help even more effectively in this war than she had done in the First Great War, when her contributions included £146,200,000 in direct money and nearly 1,500,000 serving overseas. "India maintains in peace-time," he said, "a standing army of 150,000 of all arms, excluding British troops stationed in that country, and in war has a vast reserve of man power to draw upon. Regular units of the Indian Army are now serving overseas in Malaya, Aden and Egypt. The Army is being steadily expanded, and pilots and mechanics for the Air Force are for the first time to be recruited, commissioned and trained in India. The recruiting offices have been so overwhelmed with volunteers that the authorities have had to cry a halt and explain that it is impossible to utilize all offers of services at once."

The training of Australia's militia and of her volunteer force for overseas had proceeded with the consent of all parties, and when the Federal Parliament on December 10 adjourned until April, Mr. Curtin, the Labour leader, paid a popular tribute in the House of Representatives to the Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, for his leadership of the nation



CANADIANS AND THEIR LEADER

The Canadian contingents received a tremendous welcome when they arrived in Britain, and, below, members of the first party to reach these shores are seen acknowledging the cheers of crowds lining the quayside. On the right is Major-General A. G. McNaughton, Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Oversea Force.

Photos, Fox; Pictorial Press



in wartime. In a speech at the end of the session, which was broadcast, Mr. Menzies reviewed the problems and work of the government, and concluded that with the development of Australia's Air Force, and the immense Allied naval superiority, it was practicable to send overseas the Second Australian Imperial Force, so that Australian soldiers would "once more be seen in Europe, giving the lie to the fatuous German hope that some fatal disease had overtaken British unity."

The moral was underlined by the arrival in Britain of Canada's first contingent of troops on December 17, followed by a second contingent a fortnight later. The public took to them promptly, and noticed how they sang the songs of 1914–18 as well as "Roll Out the Barrel." A New Zealand contingent, in the nature of an advance cadre, was already in training in England, and members of the Canadian Air Force were arriving to organize aerodromes and camps that would be occupied by the Canadian Air contingents.

Canadian Contingent Arrives

As in other parts of the Empire, there had been plenty of lively political discussion arising out of war policies, but few people expected the coup carried out by the Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, in January, 1940. Lord Tweedsmuir, the Governor-General, in what was to be his last speech from the Throne, announced that the Canadian Government intended to appeal to the country against its critics, who accused it of lacking energy in war measures. The "snap election" at such a time was, of course, bitterly attacked by the Government's critics, the most important of whom was Dr. Manion, leader of the Conservatives, though the criticism which Mr. Mackenzie King appeared to have made the pretext for holding a general election had come from Mr. Mitchell Hepburn, Premier of Ontario, in the Ontario Legislature.



NOVEL LOCOMOTION FOR ANZAC TROOPS

Above, some New Zealand troops stationed in England are seen going to the ranges on the coast for anti-tank gun firing practice. Owing to the difficulty of marching over the shingle, a local invention, the "shingle sledge," is used to take men from the guns to the targets to inspect the results.

Photo, Keystone

In the long view the most significant fact about Canada's domestic quarrel was that it revolved around the question whether the Government was carrying out war measures efficiently and energetically enough. There was no question among Canadians about the necessity and justice of the great war preparations being made by Canada. In spite of the severe criticism of such a step, the election was arranged, and Parliament was dissolved. The polling date was fixed for March 26, the reason given by the Government being the necessity to hold the election before any spring offensive on the Western Front, so that Canadian soldiers could record their votes while still in England. There was a widespread conviction in Canada that in the spring, probably in May, the war would enter on a more active phase. In spite of this political upheaval, the work of preparation went on actively and trained and equipped troops from Canada were to continue arriving in Britain during the following months.



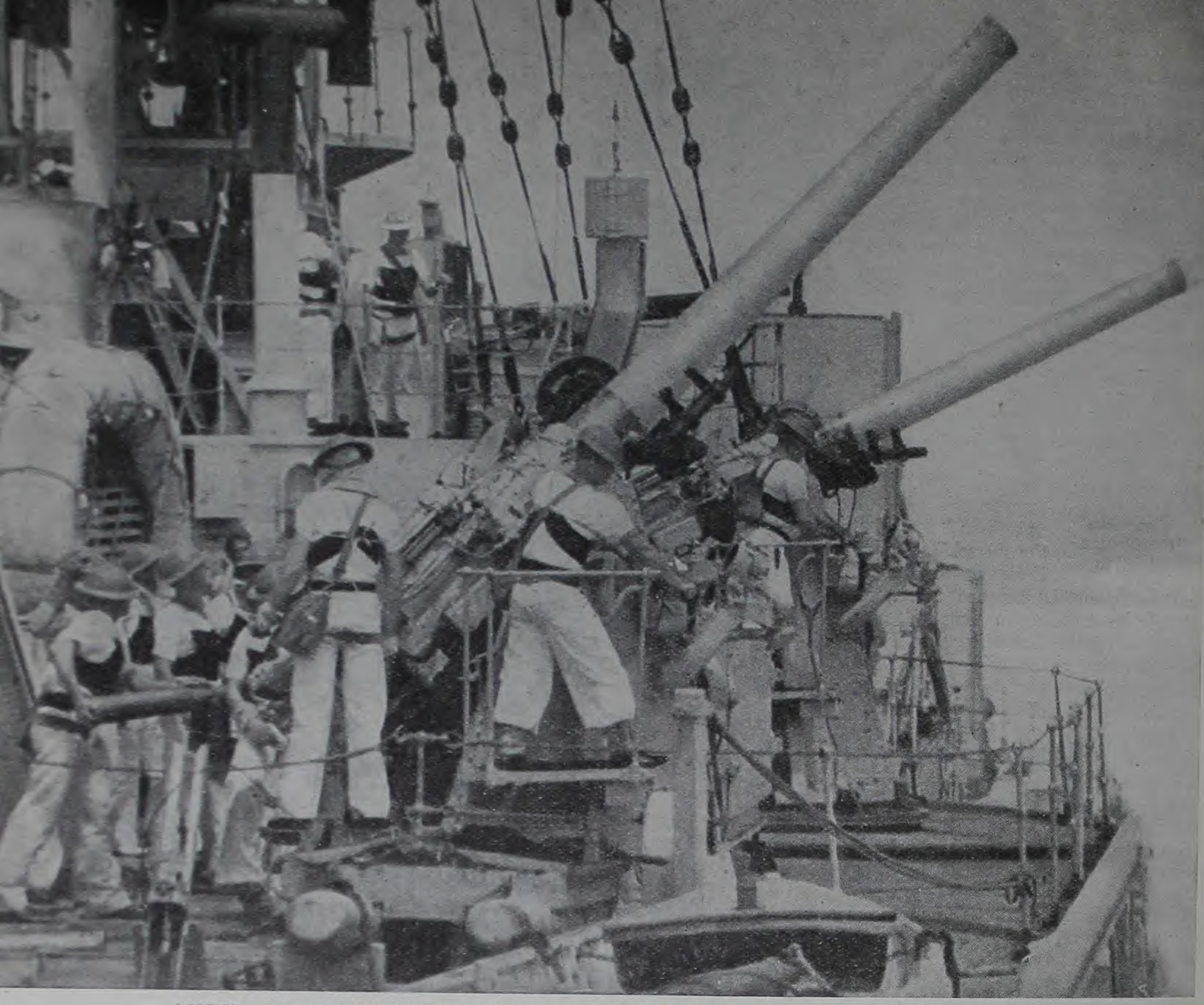


GENERAL ELECTION IN CANADA

At the Canadian General Election held at the end of March, 1940, Mr. Mackenzie King, the Liberal Prime Minister, secured a sweeping victory. On the left is Dr. R. J. Manion, leader of the Conservative Party, who was defeated at the polls. On the right is Mr. Mitchell Hepburn, Premier of Ontario, whose criticism of the government was the pretext for holding the election.

Photos, Wide World

In the mustering of forces during the first five months of the war the Empire's navies played an important part which should not be forgotten. The safety of convoys and the maintenance of Imperial communications generally depended much upon their cooperation. The Royal Canadian Navy called up naval reservists and enlisted new recruits, who were in training at the two naval bases of Halifax and Esquimalt. When the war started Canada's fleet consisted of six modern destroyers and five minesweeping trawlers. In October the 1,390-ton, 36-knot flotilla leader "Kempenfelt" was taken over from the Royal Navy and renamed "Assiniboine." By November some 40 vessels had been requisitioned for minesweeping and patrol work. On January 6 Mr. C. D. Howe, Minister of Transport, responsible



AUSTRALIA READY TO SPEAK WITH HER GUNS

The anti-aircraft guns of an Australian cruiser are here seen in action during naval manoeuvres which were watched by members of Australia's war cabinet. The deeds of the British cruisers in the battle of the River Plate put the Australian crews on their mettle, and they showed themselves ready to emulate the victors of that successful engagement.

Photo, Associated Press

for the Canadian War Supply Board, described its activities in a broadcast address, and said that tenders had then been invited for some 72 craft for the Navy, ranging in size from 18-foot power dinghies to steel ships of the British whale-catcher design, and these new additions would involve an expenditure of about $17,000,000.

New Zealand had no sea-going fleet of her own, but in 1922 she had established a Volunteer Reserve with headquarters at Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin. She was lent two cruisers of the Royal Navy, which formed the New Zealand Division, and were maintained at her expense—the 7,000-ton, 6-inch-gun cruisers "Achilles" and "Leander," built in 1933-34. The "Achilles" was dispatched first to the Eastern Pacific and then to the South Atlantic, to assist in hunting down German raiders. This was how New Zealanders came to distinguish themselves early in the naval war. The "Achilles," two-thirds of the crew of which were New Zealanders, was one of the light cruisers which engaged and crippled the pocket battleship "Admiral Graf Spee" off Montevideo, Uruguay, in December, 1939. New Zealand had by this date added to her resources an armed merchant cruiser and some minesweeping trawlers.

Australia's was the strongest individual naval reinforcement, with six cruisers, a flotilla leader, four destroyers and two escort vessels; and additional building, especially of small craft, was in hand before 1940, besides the ships that had been requisitioned during the autumn for minesweeping and patrol work. A flotilla of fast motor torpedo boats was among the additions that were ordered to be built. Of the cruisers, two—the "Australia" and "Canberra," built in 1927—were of the British Navy's 8-inch-gun County Class.

South Africa possessed no navy, but during the autumn organized a special "Seaward Defence Force" under Rear-Admiral G. W. Hallifax, including many trawlers and similar vessels for minesweeping and patrol work in conjunction with the reconnaissance squadrons of the air arm. The personnel of the "Seaward Defence Force" came from the South African Division of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, which numbered about 1,000 on the outbreak of war, and was quickly increased by enlistments during the autumn.

The Royal Indian Navy, consisting of five escort vessels and a patrol ship, was placed under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief East Indies, together with their crews, and thenceforward cooperated with the British Navy in

guarding vital Indian trade routes, constantly patrolling the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the monsoon-swept waters of the Indian Ocean. As the Royal Indian Navy was responsible for the local defence of India's coast and ports, a large number of small craft were requisitioned and equipped during the autumn, and four more modern escort vessels had been ordered by the New Year. The small local defence craft were manned by the Royal Indian Naval Reserve and Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve, which had been established early in 1939, together with a nucleus of Royal Indian Navy personnel. Apart from the Reserves, the seagoing strength of the Royal Indian Navy was about 170 officers and 1,500 men, recruited mainly from the Punjab and Konkan.

The gradual welding in united action and policy of lands within the British Commonwealth while the war dragged through its opening phases occurred among the diversified elements of the Colonial Empire also, making a parallel with their initial demonstrations of loyal sentiment. The general feeling, often balked of more active participation because Great Britain could not make use of it, found commonest expression in many voluntary funds, usually for the Red Cross. A remarkable example of such a contribution was announced in January, when Sir Douglas Jardine, Governor of Sierra Leone, received a cheque for £758 11s. for Red Cross Societies in England. The sum had been contributed by 126 persons representing small (non-British) Lebano-Syrian communities in Sierra Leone, and in proportion to their means it was a very generous total. In forwarding their gift, these members of the Arab people expressed their gratitude for the freedom that they had enjoyed in Sierra Leone. Again, by way of celebrating the New Year, the Sultan of Lahej, in the Aden Protectorate, sent 13,500 rupees as his contribution to the Empire's funds. In Malaya, which had specially contributed £1,000,000 towards Imperial defence before the outbreak of war, Europeans had to be earnestly discouraged from returning home to volunteer for war service, their work in developing the colony's economic resources being so much more important. In January the Malayan Patriotic Fund for war charities had reached £100,000, to which even the Chinese rickshaw owners had contributed $1,000. It would be possible to circle the globe with similar instances from other countries, showing that they shared in some degree the conviction of Australia, expressed by Mr. Menzies on December 10, that their " real frontier was on the Rhine and the East Coast of England."

MEN OF THE 'ACHILLES' WELCOMED TO THEIR HOME

H.M.S. 'Achilles,' cruiser of the New Zealand Division, received a rousing reception when she arrived home in New Zealand after her victory at the River Plate ; 380 of her crew were New Zealanders, and about 100,000 people gathered in the streets of Auckland to cheer them as they marched to the Town Hall for a civic welcome

Photo, Associated Press

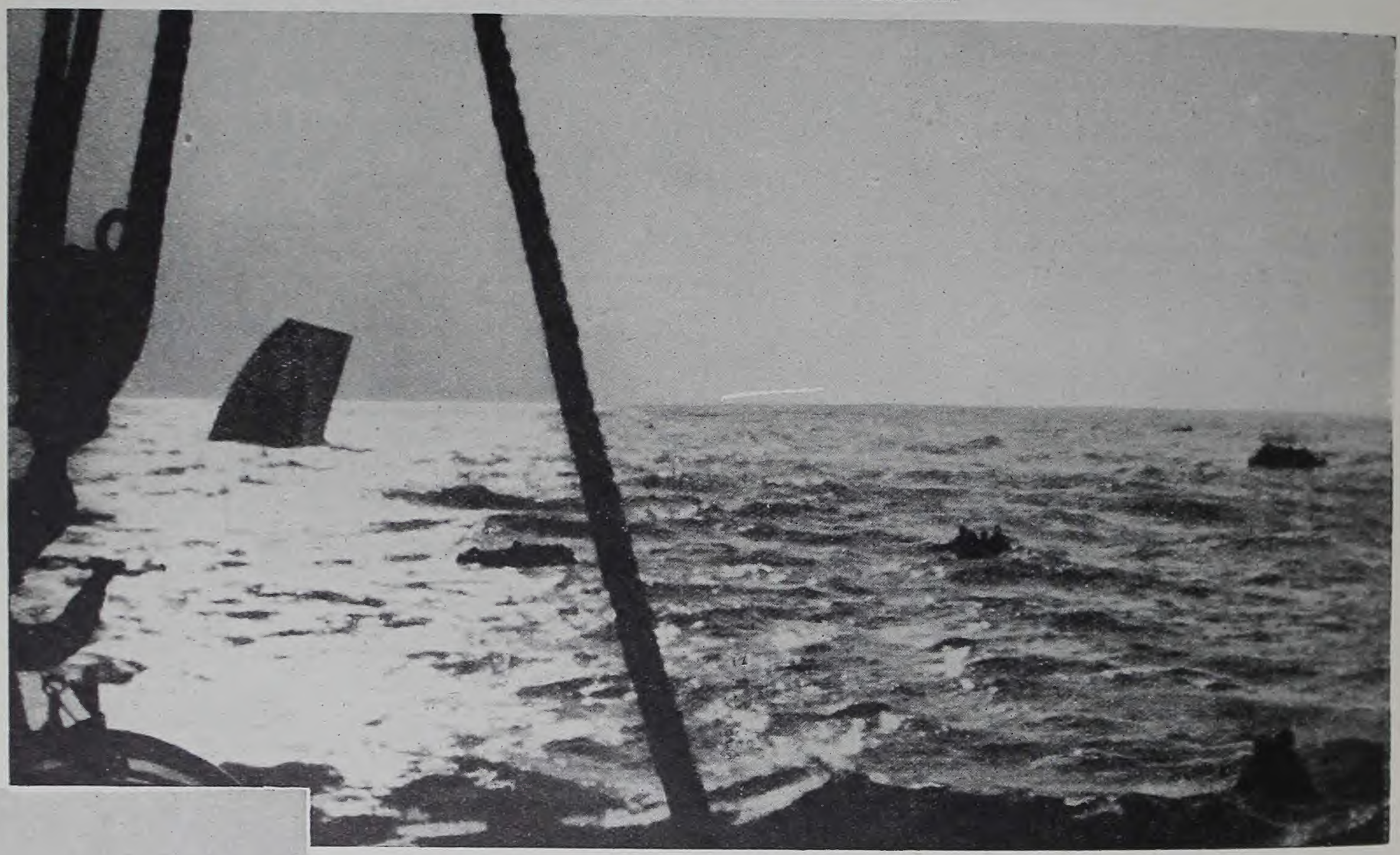


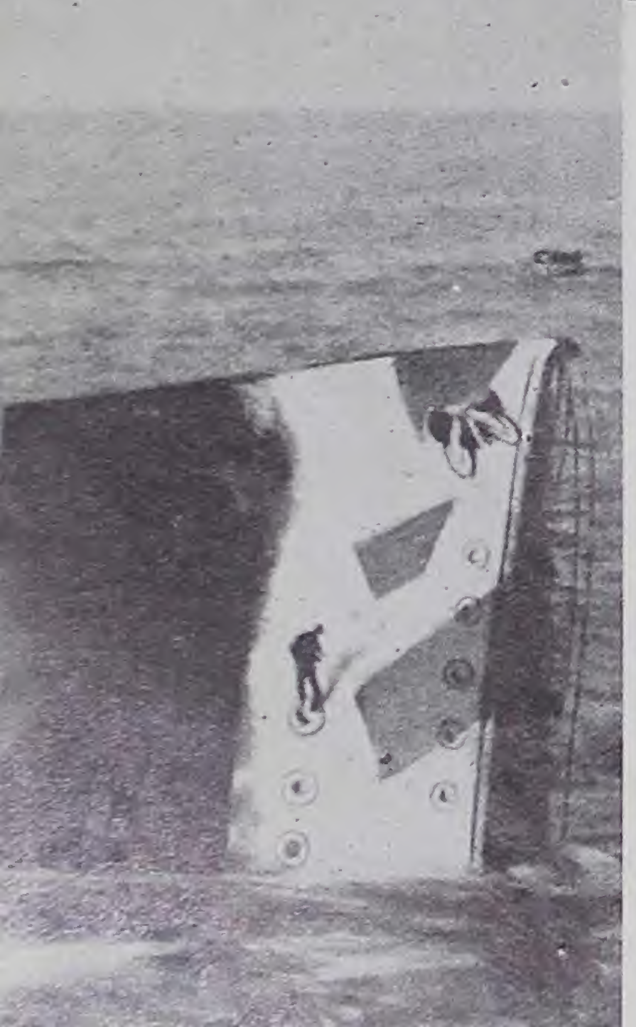


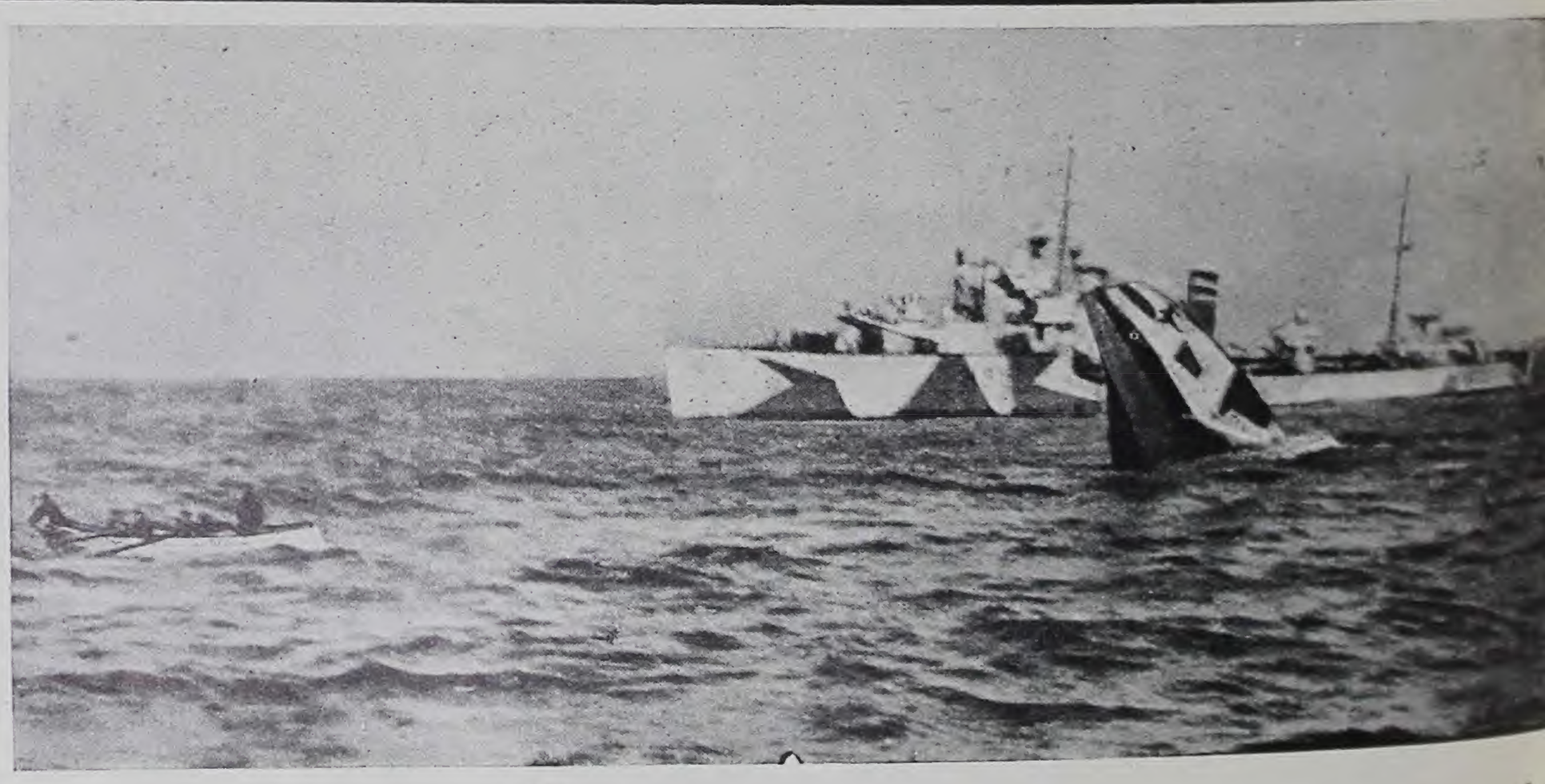
LAST MOMENTS OF A BRITISH DESTROYER

On January 21, 1940, the Admiralty announced the loss of H.M. Destroyer 'Grenville,' sunk by mine or torpedo in the North Sea. On the left is the 'Grenville' as she was. Below, the bows of the ill-fated ship are seen jutting above the water as boats pull away with survivors. The bottom photographs show, left, the last man to leave the sinking ship, balancing himself in a porthole on the bow; right, the 'Grenville's' bow silhouetted against one of the rescuing destroyers.

Photos, Associated Press; Wright & Logan







Chapter 57

THE SEA AFFAIR: NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE FIRST WEEKS OF 1940

A Five-Hundred-to-One Chance of Safety in British Convoys—Fine Feat of Seamanship—Loss of the 'Dunbar Castle'—Three British Submarines 'Failed to Return'—What Happened to 'Starfish,' 'Seahorse' and 'Undine' —Sinking of the Destroyers 'Grenville' and 'Exmouth'—Aerial Attacks on Fishing Craft and Lightships—Signal Victory Over a U-Boat

THE first month of the year 1940 was not characterized by any outstanding naval action. Pursuing their depredations on peaceful shipping, the Germans continued to take toll of merchant vessels, again to the considerable disadvantage of the neutral nations. The British Navy suffered serious losses in the destroyers "Grenville" and "Exmouth," the submarines "Undine," "Starfish" and "Seahorse," and several Admiralty trawlers. But despite these gains the Nazis showed no signs of being able to intensify their submarine campaign, and it is fair to say that their inglorious successes were won by the mine, the bomb and the machine-gun as much as or more than by the torpedo.

For with half her submarine effectives destroyed, Germany's empty boast of speedy replacement was clearly falsified. It became obvious that something had gone awry with the vaunted scheme of mass production which was to place a new submarine in service every day—that is, something of a purely technical character other than the practical impossibility of providing officers and crews on the same scale.

And so we find the sea affair in January, 1940, contributing to German credit little more than the sinking of cargo boats and the bombing and machine-gunning of fishing vessels, but adding still one more laurel to the record of "frightfulness" in the attacks on Trinity House lightships.

British statesmen at this time showed themselves well content with the position at sea. Both the Prime Minister and the First Lord made public pronouncements of the first importance, in which they clearly stressed the growing advantage on the side of the Allies, which became more obvious as the months passed by. Mr. Churchill, in one of the most memorable speeches of his career (at the Manchester Free Trade Hall on January 27), recalled an earlier broadcast speech in which he had said that if Great Britain could reach the spring without any interruption to her sea-borne trade she would have gained the opening campaign of the war. He was speaking, of course, of the whole war effort and of the respite which might be hoped for to build up the military and economic strength of the country. He did not suggest that the spring had yet arrived, but with all his customary caution he did imply that, so far, no major disaster had befallen which could in any way dim the prospect of that victory. Sea-borne trade had been interrupted, but never to the extent which might vitally affect in a detrimental manner the life of the nation or the conduct of the war.

Mastery of the Sea

But no one could complain that the First Lord was parsimonious in his facts and figures, any more than he was pusillanimous in his invective, and again he fortified his argument with encouraging statements: "Let no one be disheartened," he said, "when he reads of daily losses or listens to them reiterated by the B.B.C." After five months of violent naval war it was better that his audience should remember matters of real encouragement, amongst which he enumerated the following.

It was a 500 to 1 chance, the First Lord said, against any ship which obeyed



NAZIS FLOUTED ALL HUMANE CONVENTIONS

The upper photograph shows the East Dudgeon Lightship, attacked and machine-gunned by Nazi aircraft on January 29, 1940. Beneath is the Trinity House vessel 'Reculver,' another victim of Nazi aeroplanes. An officer was killed and 32 hands injured.

Photos, Wide World; Fox

Admiralty instructions and joined a British convoy being sunk. Under the operation of the convoy system, out of nearly 7,500 ships convoyed only 15 had been lost; and it was to be remembered that the convoy system was becoming more refined and rapid as the weeks went by. The volume of British imports and exports, inevitably checked by the change from peace to war, was now steadily increasing. The ships captured and ships built had almost made good the losses suffered; and, finally, very important reinforcements were approaching both the British Navy and merchant shipping, to meet new dangers and new assaults which might have to be faced in the future.

The first five months had seen the U-boat driven from using the gun to using the torpedo, and largely driven from using the torpedo to laying the stealthy mine. There was no doubt, Mr. Churchill added, that the attack by mines would be severe and costly, but he thought that British science was superior in several important ways to that of the enemy, and he saw no reason why the mine menace should not be brought into control as effectively as it was in the last war. In point of fact, during the month of January the sowing of mines by aeroplane did sensibly diminish. This was in part due to the success of R.A.F. patrols over German seaplane bases, which prevented German aircraft leaving on night mine-sowing raids.

First Lord's Optimism

During the severe winter weather which ushered in the New Year and continued for weeks, the sufferings of the victims of the war at sea were of the most intense description. Abandoned to their fate on rafts, floating wreckage or open lifeboats, many died of hunger and exposure before help could reach them. Often their fate was a lingering one of slowly diminishing hopes, to end only in death itself. But every day revealed fresh instances of heroism adding new lustre to the immortal records of the men of the Royal Navy and Mercantile Marine.

On January 6 it was announced that the official congratulations of the Admiralty had been conveyed to an 18-year-old deck hand for a remarkable feat of seamanship and endurance after his ship, the London steamer "Arlington Court," had been torpedoed in fierce weather in the Atlantic in November (*see* Chapter 36). The lad was Malcolm Morrison, of Carbost, near Stornoway, Isle of Lewis. He navigated a water-logged lifeboat for six days and saved the lives of five of his shipmates. This gallant youth happened to be the only one aboard the drifting boat who knew how to set a sail, knowledge he had gained as a boy in a drifter. He was elected "skipper" of the craft, and steered a course by the aid of a pocket compass, until finally he reached a busy shipping lane, where the lifeboat was sighted and rescued by a Norwegian tanker. Morrison even took charge of the rationing of the water supply, and when his feat became known he was invited to the Admiralty to tell his story and receive congratulations.



INTREPID YOUNG SCOT

This 18-year-old deckboy, Malcolm Morrison, of Stornoway, Lewis, is being congratulated by a London policeman as he left the Admiralty. After the sinking of the "Arlington Court" on November 20, 1939, he navigated a water-logged lifeboat for six days, saving the lives of those with him.

Photo, Topical

ALLIED NAVAL STAFFS CONFER

Members of the British and French Naval Staffs are here seen in conference at the Admiralty. Left to right, seated: Capitaine de Vaisseau de Rivoyre, Vice-Amiral Odend'hal, Capitaine de Vaisseau Auphan, Amiral de la Flotte Darlan, Captain C. S. Holland, Vice-Admiral T. S. V. Phillips, Rear-Admiral H. M. Burrough, Captain V. H. Danckwerts, Vice-Admiral B. H. Ramsay, Admiral Sir Lionel Preston. Left to right, standing: Lieutenant de Vaisseau Lacombe, Captain L. H. Bell, Captain R. H. F. De Salis, Commander J. D. Owen, Commander R. F. Nichols, Commander J. F. N. Bradford. Vice-Admiral Phillips, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, at the head of the table, has the French members on his right.

British Official Photograph: Crown Copyright





VICTIM OF MAGNETIC MINE

The 10,000-ton liner ' Dunbar Castle ' was wrecked on January 9, 1940, through striking a magnetic mine which broke her back. The vessel is seen above, partly submerged. On the left two youngsters are reading the ship's name on one of her lifeboats, a grim relic washed up on the south-east coast.

Photos, Fox ; Keystone

" The men got to calling me ' skipper,' " Morrison said to a reporter of " The Daily Telegraph." " At first some of them tried to row the boat, but they broke two of the four oars and had to give it up. So I rigged up a sail and took charge of the steering. I did not sleep at all until we were rescued."

None of the crew, said Morrison, was fully dressed. In the boat were four blankets, but they were soon soaked by the heavy seas which the boat shipped. All suffered terribly from frostbite, and all save Morrison himself had a long spell in hospital afterwards. He said that he knew in which direction to steer because he had taken turns at the wheel of the " Arlington Court," and had afterwards followed the north-easterly course taken by that ship. During the period under review the Germans reserved the main part of their attacks to small vessels out of convoy, but the ever-present danger of the mine was shown on January 9, when a major loss occurred. On that day the 10,000-ton Union Castle liner " Dunbar Castle," sailing in convoy for the Cape, struck a mine and sank off the south-east coast. The liner had about 48 passengers aboard, including nine children, and although she sank within fifteen minutes they were all rescued.

The commander, Capt. H. K. Causton, a storekeeper and a seaman were killed by the explosion. Captain Causton struggled, mortally wounded, from the bridge to his cabin to try and secure the ship's papers. He died ashore the next morning. The chief officer, Mr. E. H. Robinson, took charge of the ship. He has described how, immediately the vessel was struck, she started to heel over, and reached an alarming angle in a few minutes. There was no panic, and the boats on the starboard side were lowered. Mr. Robinson paid special tribute to the stewardess and some trained nurses and Sisters of Mercy who were aboard and did wonderful work amongst the women and children.

A remarkable example of coolness was shown by the second officer (Mr. Saunders), who set his own broken leg while the lifeboat in his charge was tossing in a choppy sea ; as he fixed the splint he gave orders to the crew and encouraged them to row harder.

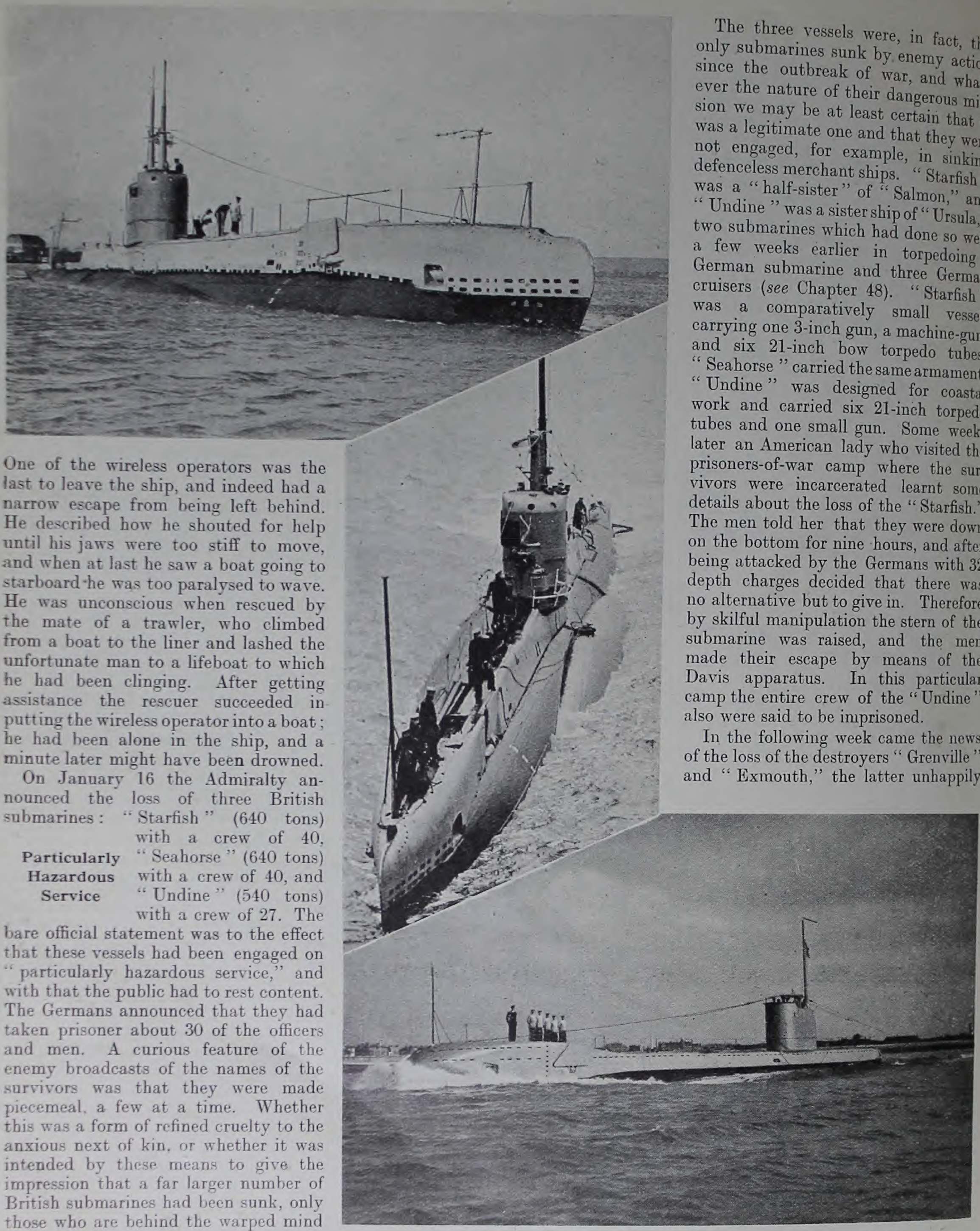
One of the wireless operators was the last to leave the ship, and indeed had a narrow escape from being left behind. He described how he shouted for help until his jaws were too stiff to move, and when at last he saw a boat going to starboard he was too paralysed to wave. He was unconscious when rescued by the mate of a trawler, who climbed from a boat to the liner and lashed the unfortunate man to a lifeboat to which he had been clinging. After getting assistance the rescuer succeeded in putting the wireless operator into a boat; he had been alone in the ship, and a minute later might have been drowned.

Particularly Hazardous Service

On January 16 the Admiralty announced the loss of three British submarines: "Starfish" (640 tons) with a crew of 40, "Seahorse" (640 tons) with a crew of 40, and "Undine" (540 tons) with a crew of 27. The bare official statement was to the effect that these vessels had been engaged on "particularly hazardous service," and with that the public had to rest content. The Germans announced that they had taken prisoner about 30 of the officers and men. A curious feature of the enemy broadcasts of the names of the survivors was that they were made piecemeal, a few at a time. Whether this was a form of refined cruelty to the anxious next of kin, or whether it was intended by these means to give the impression that a far larger number of British submarines had been sunk, only those who are behind the warped mind of the German propagandist can tell. Actually it appeared later that a far greater number than 30 had been saved, including the entire crews of "Starfish" and "Undine." No survivors of "Seahorse" were reported, however.

The three vessels were, in fact, the only submarines sunk by enemy action since the outbreak of war, and whatever the nature of their dangerous mission we may be at least certain that it was a legitimate one and that they were not engaged, for example, in sinking defenceless merchant ships. "Starfish" was a "half-sister" of "Salmon," and "Undine" was a sister ship of "Ursula," two submarines which had done so well a few weeks earlier in torpedoing a German submarine and three German cruisers (*see* Chapter 48). "Starfish" was a comparatively small vessel, carrying one 3-inch gun, a machine-gun, and six 21-inch bow torpedo tubes. "Seahorse" carried the same armament; "Undine" was designed for coastal work and carried six 21-inch torpedo tubes and one small gun. Some weeks later an American lady who visited the prisoners-of-war camp where the survivors were incarcerated learnt some details about the loss of the "Starfish." The men told her that they were down on the bottom for nine hours, and after being attacked by the Germans with 32 depth charges decided that there was no alternative but to give in. Therefore by skilful manipulation the stern of the submarine was raised, and the men made their escape by means of the Davis apparatus. In this particular camp the entire crew of the "Undine" also were said to be imprisoned.

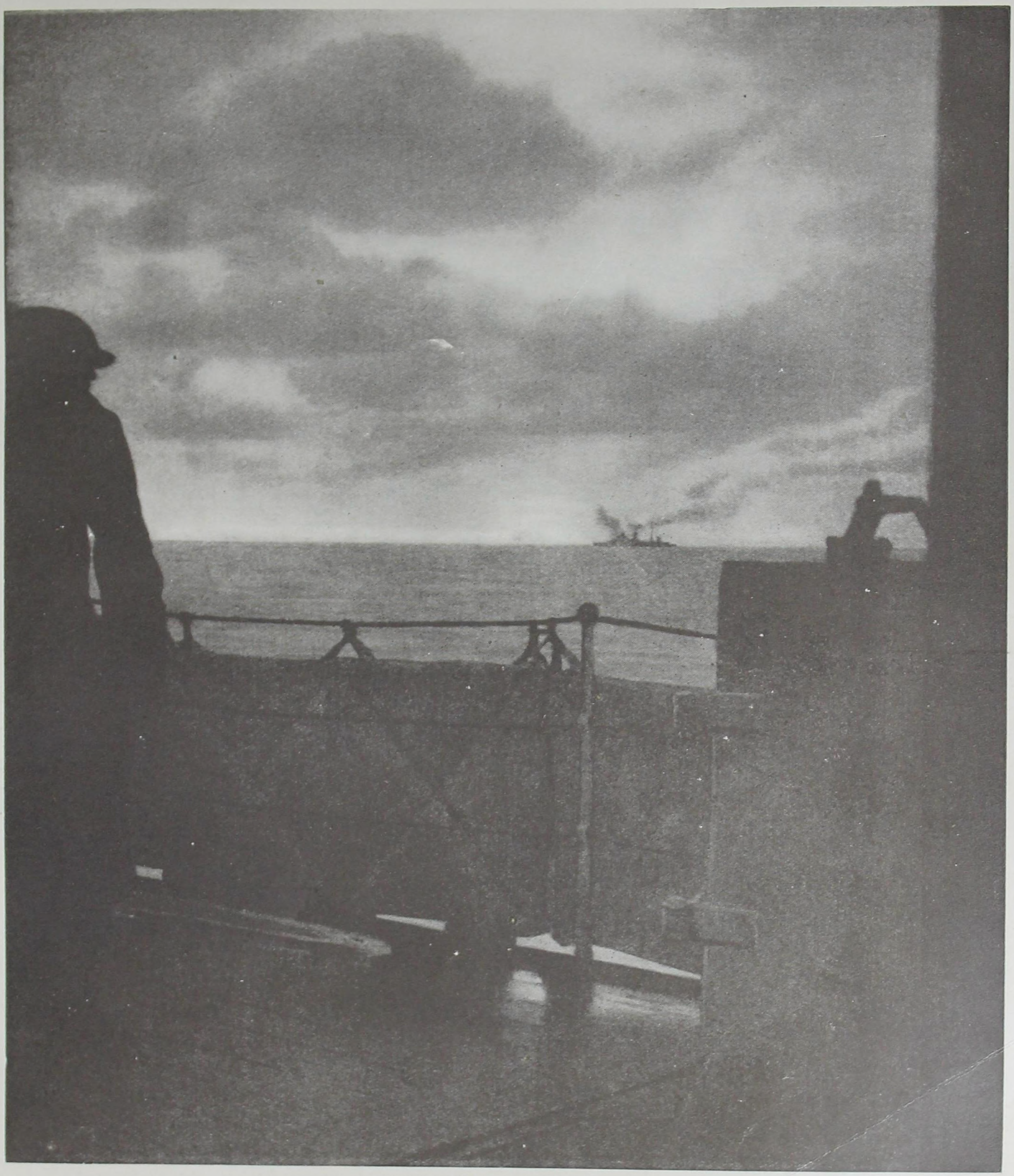
In the following week came the news of the loss of the destroyers "Grenville" and "Exmouth," the latter unhappily



SUBMARINES LOST WHILE ON DANGEROUS MISSION

Three British submarines were lost during the first month of 1940, the 'Seahorse' (top), 'Starfish' (centre), and 'Undine' (bottom). They were the first British submarines to be sunk by enemy action since the beginning of the war. The crews of the 'Starfish' and 'Undine' were able to make their escape by means of the Davis apparatus and were interned in Germany.

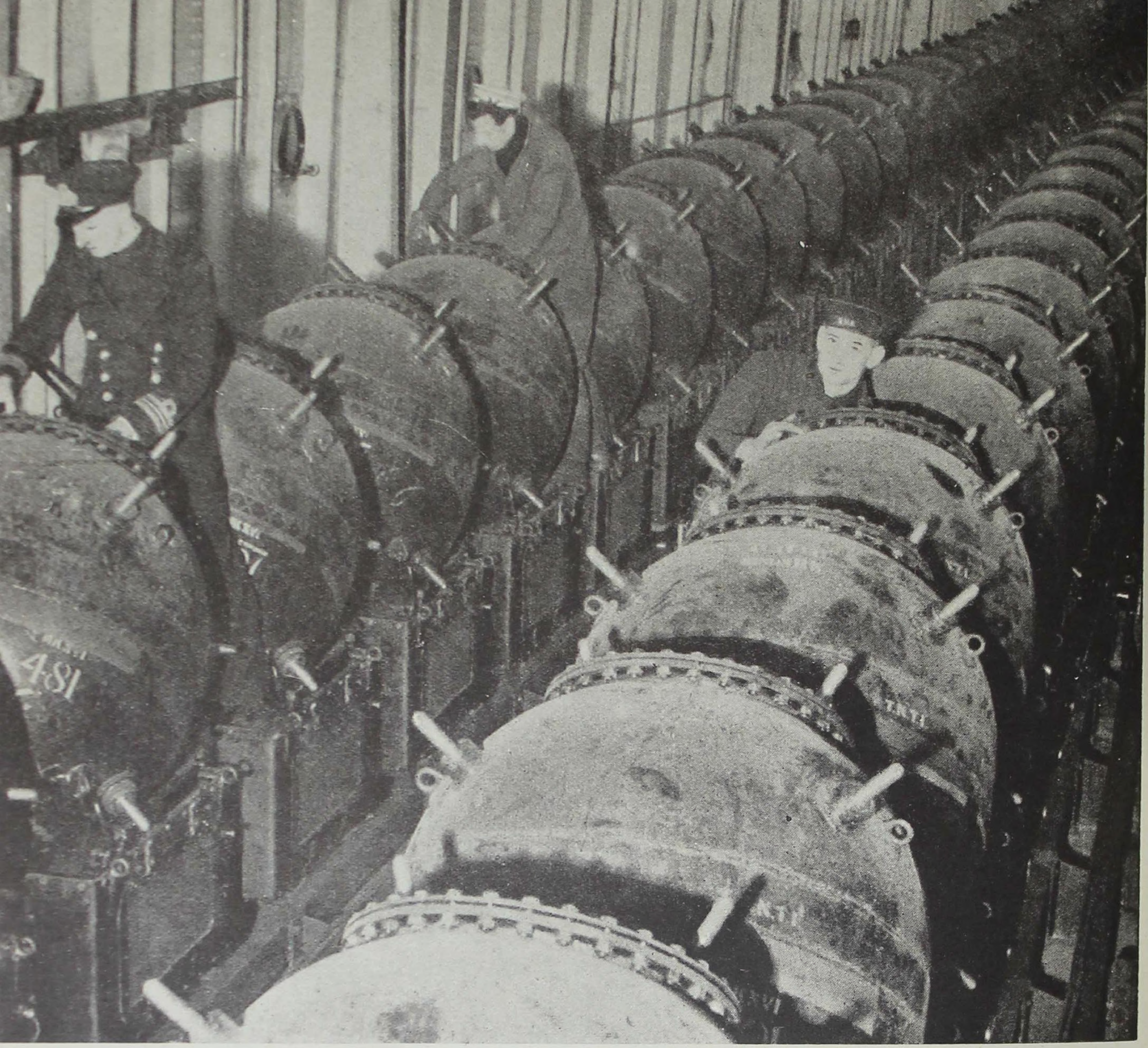
Photos, Central Press; Wright & Logan



'AJAX' DEFYING THE 'GRAF SPEE'S' LIGHTNING

Here is a unique photograph of the River Plate naval battle taken by Marine Sgt. Coleman of the crew of H.M.S. 'Achilles.' It shows H.M.S. 'Ajax' firing her foremost turret guns at the German battleship 'Admiral Graf Spee' as the latter was running full out for the safety of Montevideo harbour. The 'Ajax' is some 600 yards away from the 'Achilles,' and making high speed. (See also other pictures in pp. 580–1.)

Photo, Central Press





MODERN MINE-LAYER'S DEADLY CARGO

Mines can be laid by almost any class of vessel, and cargo ships as well as specially built mine-layers are used for this task. The mine-layer is fitted with rotary gear and an endless chain equipment, which engages the mines in succession, each with its sinker and line. They are drawn aft on trolleys on a special track, and dropped over the stern one after another. Above are seen some of the mines carried on a British mine-layer which was once a pleasure steamer. Left, is a close-up of a mine, on which a humorist has given rein to his wit. British contact mines are moored in accordance with the Hague Convention, and fitted with a device that renders them harmless if they break loose.

Photos, C. E. Brown

Photos, " Daily Mirror "

FROM THE SHELTER OF THE SMOKE SCREEN

In naval operations the smoke screen often proves invaluable in concealing attacking forces from the view of the defenders. The photograph above shows what a smoke screen looks like when viewed from a distance. Below, a destroyer is seen suddenly emerging from the shelter of a smoke screen. The blocking of the harbours at Zeebrugge and Ostend in 1918 were good examples of the value of smoke screens in providing cover for an attacking force.



DOVER PATROL'S WATCH AND WARD OVER THE NARROW SEAS

In the Second Great War, as in the First, the vigilance of the Dover Patrol played a great part in the defence of the country as well as in helping to keep open the shipping lanes off our coasts. Above, a vessel of the Patrol, on its beat off the British coast, passes a neutral merchantman.

Photo, Sport & General